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When They Cry Kaiketsu-hen
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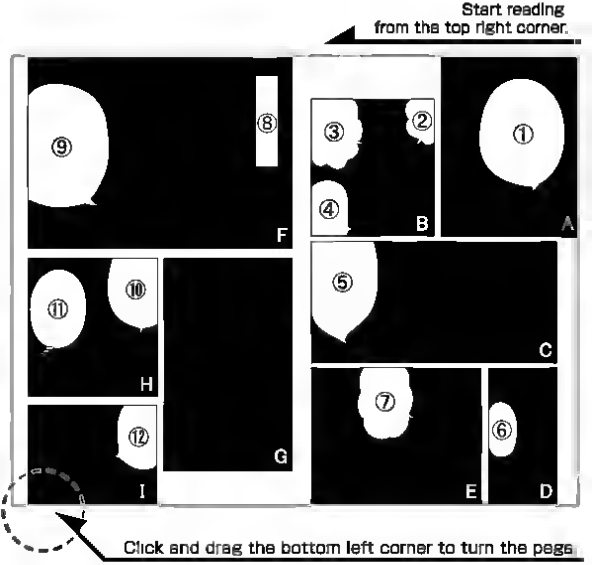
In Japan, manga is generally read from right to left. All reading starts on the upper right corner, and ends on the lower left.



Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY
EYE OPENING ARC

Higurashi WHEN THEY CRY EYE OPENING ARC

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CHAPTER 12: RETROSPECT

ONE YEAR AFTER SATOSHI'S DISAPPEARANCE...

...I FINALLY FOUND THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS DEATH.

BUT I STILL KNOW NOTHING OF THE TRUTH.

WHY?

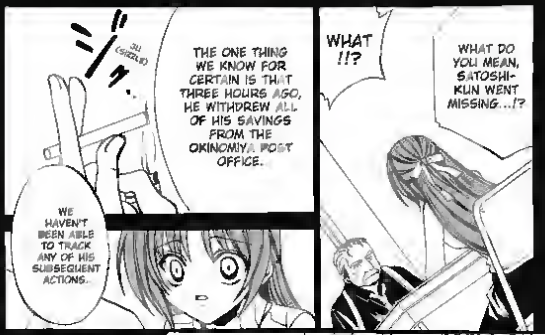
FOR WHAT PURPOSE WAS SATOSHI-KUN ERASED?

AND WHO IS THE ONE WHO ACTUALLY ERASED HIM?

SATOSHI-KUN'S DISAPPEARANCE

...SATOSHI HOJO WENT MISSING.

JUNE 24, 1982...


THE ONE THING WE KNOW FOR CERTAIN IS THAT THREE HOURS AGO, HE WITHDREW ALL OF HIS SAVINGS FROM THE OKINOMIYA POST OFFICE.
WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO TRACK ANY OF HIS SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS.
WHAT !!?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SATOSHI-KUN WENT MISSING...!?

...BUT I WONDER IF HE USED THAT MONEY TO DISAPPEAR, TO GO SOMEWHERE FAR AWAY...
THIS IS JUST MY GUESS...
GETAWAY MONEY!? THAT'S RIDICULOUS!

AND HE SPENT THAT MONEY ON THAT EXPENSIVE GIANT TEDDY BEAR AT THE TOY STORE! THERE'S NO WAY HE COULD HAVE USED IT TO SKIP TOWN!
HE WAS SAVING THAT MONEY TO BUY A PRESENT FOR SATOKO'S BIRTHDAY!
SATOSHI-KUN IS THE ONE WHO BOUGHT IT!
I DOUBT HE COULD HAVE SAVED ENOUGH TO BUY THE BEAR AND RUN AWAY TOO!
IT'S TRUE THAT THE MOST EXPENSIVE DOLL AT THE TOY STORE IN QUESTION HAS BEEN SOLD
BUT WE CAN'T FIND ANY DEFINITIVE PROOF THAT SATOSHI-KUN WAS THE ONE WHO BOUGHT IT
ALL RIGHT LET'S SAY THAT SATOSHI-KUN DID BUY THE BEAR.
THEN WHY DIDN'T HE TAKE IT HOME?

SHION-SAN...
...LET ME SHARE A LITTLE SCENARIO I'VE COME UP WITH.
SATOSHI HOJO DEVISED A PLAN TO MURDER HIS AUNT, AND HE CARRIED IT OUT.
AS A FELLOW HUMAN BEING, I THINK IT WOULD BE ONLY NATURAL IF ALL OF THAT LED SATOSHI-KUN TO FEEL A GROWING URGE TO KILL HER IN ORDER TO PROTECT HIS SISTER.
I'VE HEARD ALL THE STORIES ABOUT HOW THE HOJOS LATE AUNT BULLIED SATOSHI-KUN AND SATOKO-SAN
—AND THAT SHE WAS ESPECIALLY PERSISTENT IN TORMENTING SATOKO-SAN
BUT BECAUSE IT WOULD BE PROBLEMATIC TO LET THE HONORABLE DAUGHTER OF THE SONOZAKI FAMILY HAVE ROMANTIC FEELINGS FOR A MURDERER
I SUSPECT THAT IT'S NOT ACTUALLY BECAUSE YOUR FAMILY LOATHES THE IDEA OF YOU HAVING A RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMEONE FROM A FAMILY THEY DISLIKE...
SHION-SAN. YOU'VE BEEN FORBIDDEN FROM ANY INTERACTION WITH SATOSHI-KUN, CORRECT?

IF THERE WAS A PROBLEM WITH A ROMANCE BETWEEN THE SONOZAKIS AND THEIR ENEMIES THE HOJOS
THEN IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN STRANGE AT ALL FOR THEM TO HAVE TRIED TO STOP IT SOONER
BEFORE I LET IT OUT THAT I WAS SHION
I SPENT TIME WITH SATOSHI-KUN AS MION BUT THERE WERE NO REPERCUSSIONS
THAT'S POSSIBLE

AND AREN'T YOU KNOWN FOR NOT KNOWING WHEN TO GIVE UP?
WHAT I MEAN IS EVEN AFTER THE MAIN SONOZAKI FAMILY THREATENED YOU TO MAKE YOU BREAK OFF YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH SATOSHI KUN AND MADE YOU TEAR OFF YOUR FINGERNAILS YOU STILL DIDN'T BREAK IT OFF DID YOU?
AND THAT'S WHY THEY WERE SUDDENLY UNHAPPY WITH ME AND MY ROMANTIC FEELINGS FOR A MURDERER..
FROM INSIDE HINAMIZAWA, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY EASY FOR THE MAIN SONOZAKI FAMILY TO FIND OUT THAT SATOSHI-KUN WAS THE KILLER
IN THAT CASE
THEY COULD HAVE THREATENED YOU ALL THEY WANTED, BUT IT WOULDN'T HAVE DONE ANY GOOD

...THEY WOULD HAVE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO TAKE CARE OF THE OTHER HALF OF THE RELATIONSHIP, RIGHT...?
T-TAKE CARE OF...?
CALM DOWN, SHION-SAN. WE STILL DON'T KNOW FOR SURE THAT SATOSHI-KUN WAS KILLED.
THE UNDER-GROUND TORTURE CHAMBER WHERE I HAD TO TEAR OFF MY FINGER-NAILS...!
IF THE SONOZAKIS WANTED TO ERASE SATOSHI-KUN IN A SAFER, MORE SURE WAY...
...THEN THERE ARE DUNGEON CELLS THERE— AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT THE RUMORS SAY. AND EVEN FARTHER BACK, THERE'S A WELL FOR THE DISPOSING OF DEAD BODIES!
THEY OBVIOUSLY KILLED HIM IN THAT TORTURE CHAMBER AND TOSSED HIS BODY!!
WE DON'T KNOW THAT SATOSHI WAS KILLED? WHAT IS HE SAYING!?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN!? HOW!?

HE... HE'S ALIVE?
THE REPORTS ARE UNCONFIRMED, BUT A BOY MATCHING SATOSHI-KUN'S DESCRIPTION WAS SEEN AT NAGOYA STATION, ACTING AS IF HE WAS RUNNING AWAY FROM HOME. APPARENTLY HE BOARDED THE BULLET TRAIN TO TOKYO...
SHION-SAN, CALM DOWN
SA-TOSHI-KUN IS ALIVE?
THIS IS ANOTHER GUESS OF MINE...
...BUT I THINK THAT ORYOU SONOZAKI FIRST SUGGESTED THAT THEY KILL SATOSHI-KUN...
...AND I SUSPECT YOUR SISTER, MION-SAN, STOPPED HER
MION...?
IT'S TRUE...
...THAT THERE'S A STRONG CHANCE MION WOULD HAVE SHOWN MERCY.
MOST LIKELY, THE SONOZAKIS CONTACTED SATOSHI-KUN...
THEY SAID THEY COULDN'T FULLY PROTECT HIM FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF ALL THIS...
...AND THEY COERCED HIM INTO RUNNING AWAY

I AGREE
SATOSHI-KUN WOULD HAVE REFUSED THERE'S NO WAY HE WOULD HAVE LEFT HIS SISTER ALONE IN HINAMIZAWA!
INDEED SATOSHI-KUN WOULD HAVE WITHDRAWN THAT MONEY AND GONE STRAIGHT TO THE TOY STORE WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT
BUT SATOSHI-KUN NEVER WOULD HAVE USED THAT MONEY FOR ANYTHING EXCEPT THAT TEDDY BEAR
...SO THE SONOZAKIS WOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT HE HAD SAVED ENOUGH MONEY TO RUN AWAY.
MION SONOZAKI-SAN FOUND HIM THE JOB HE WAS WORKING...
THEN—
YOU SAID HE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO LEAVE HIS SISTER IN HINAMI-ZAWA
...WHAT IF THE BEAR WAS SOLD AND WASN'T THERE ANY-MORE?
BUT... WHAT IF...

!!?
BUT WHAT IF THE SONOZAKIS PROMISED TO TAKE CARE OF HER?
...ALL HE HAS LEFT IS THE CRUMPLED-UP HUNDRED THOUSAND YEN
WITH THE BEAR HE MEANT TO BUY GONE...
AND...
...THEY TELL HIM THEY'LL TAKE CARE OF SATOKO.
AND THE SONOZAKIS TELL HIM IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE POLICE GET HIM AND HE NEEDS TO RUN FAR AWAY.
...HE WOULD MAKE HIS WAY UNSTEADILY TO OKINOMIDA STATION...
SATOSHI-KUN WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO FACE SATOKO.
THEN OFF TO NAGOYA ...
BELIEV-ING THAT SOMEDAY, HE WOULD BE ABLE TO RETURN...
APOLO-GIZING TO HIS BELOVED SISTER OVER AND OVER IN HIS HEART...

IN THAT CASE, HE'S ALIVE.
AND IF HE'S ALIVE,
WE'LL SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN!
I THINK THEY PROBABLY WOULD HAVE PREPARED A HIDEOUT OR SOME PLACE THAT WOULD TAKE HIM IN FAR AWAY.
MOST LIKELY THAT'S WHERE SATOSHI-KUN HEADED
THEN HE'S OKAY?
HE'LL COME BACK SOMEDAY, RIGHT?
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BACK THEN, I STILL HAD NO IDEA
OF THE GREAT PLOT BEHIND SATOSHI-KUN'S DISAPPEARANCE AND THAT THE ENTIRE VILLAGE WAS WRAPPED UP IN IT.

THE KILLER'S ARREST

THE MURDERER WAS A PSYCHOPATH WHO WAS PATTERNING HIS CRIMES AFTER THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS.

...THE MAN WHO KILLED HIS AUNT WAS ARRESTED.

A FEW WEEKS AFTER SATOSHI HOJO'S DISAPPEARANCE...

NA-HA-HA. I KNOW. I KNOW. I COULDN'T BE MORE PATHETIC.

YOU WERE SO CONFIDENT WHEN YOU INSISTED THAT SATOSHI KUN WAS THE KILLER I WAS SURE YOU WOULD KNOW WHERE HE IS BY NOW.

(SIGH) AOI/.

YES... UNFORTUNATELY...

AND WE STILL HAVEN'T CONFIRMED THE INFORMATION THAT CLAIMS HE BOARDED A BULLET TRAIN TO TOKYO.

THIS WAS A TOP SECRET INVESTIGATION. I DON'T KNOW WHO COULD HAVE LEAKED THE INFORMATION.

BUT MY, YOU HAVE SHARP EARS.

YES?

WELL, I MAY BE THE ROTTEN DREGS BUT I'M STILL A SONOZAKI
I DO MANAGE TO HEAR SOME RUMORS.
OH WELL WE'RE FRIENDS AFTER ALL WE CAN TELL EACH OTHER ANYTHING
ALL RIGHT, I'LL TALK
KOTO (SUNAO)
FIRST, TELL ME WHO IN THE WORLD THE REAL KILLER WAS.
I HEARD IT WAS SOME PSYCHOPATH. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
NAAA-HA-HA-HA! WHAT DOES THAT MEAN, YOU ASK...? THAT'S WHAT I'D LIKE TO KNOW.
I DIDN'T THINK IT COULD BE ANYONE BUT SATOSHI KUN
...WE RECEIVED A CALL FROM THE PREFECTURAL POLICE THE OTHER DAY.

WHO WAS HE?
THEY SAID THAT A MAN THEY HAD ARRESTED AND BROUGHT IN FOR QUESTIONING CONFESSED TO KILLING THE HOUSEWIFE.
HE SAID THAT THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS IN HINAMIZAWA SOUNDED INTERESTING, SO HE DECIDED HE WANTED TO BE THE ONE TO BRING ABOUT THE FOURTH YEAR'S CURSE...OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
SOME DRUGGED-UP BUFFOON I UNDERSTAND THAT EVERY TIME THEY TURNED HIM LOOSE HE'D GET INTO DRUGS GET ARRESTED AND GO THROUGH THE WHOLE THING ALL OVER AGAIN
HE SAID THAT HE THREW THE WEAPON INTO OUJIGAWA RIVER. THEY'RE SWEEPING THE RIVER NOW-
IF THEY FIND THE WEAPON WHERE THE TESTIMONY SAYS IT IS THEN IT WILL BE PERFECT.
THE DEPOSITION THEY GOT FROM HIM WAS PACKED WITH THE PROVERBIAL "INFORMATION ONLY THE MURDERER COULD HAVE KNOWN."
I HEARD IT ALL SECOND-HAND.
-D YOU'RE ABSO-LUTELY SURE IT WAS HIM?

EVEN IF THEY DON'T FIND THE WEAPON, IT'S PRETTY MUCH SETTLED?
PRETTY MUCH. HE ACCURATELY TESTIFIED ABOUT THE SCENE OF THE CRIME AND THE STATE OF THE VICTIM, INCLUDING DETAILS THAT ONLY THE KILLER COULD HAVE KNOWN
YOU DON'T SEEM CONVINCED
ACTUALLY, THE BUFFOON WAS LONG DEAD...
...EVEN BEFORE WE GOT THE CALL.
DEAD?
HE WAS IN HIS CELL WHEN HE SWALLOWED A SPOON AND SUFFOCATED. THEY DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS SUICIDE OR INSANITY—
SO THEY WEREN'T ABLE TO INVESTIGATE SUFFICIENTLY.
I'M NOT CONVINCED, BUT IT SEEMS THE HIGHER-UPS HAVE HEARD MORE THAN ENOUGH

I STILL THINK THAT SATOSHI HOJO-KUN IS THE MURDERER.
SO IT LOOKS LIKE THE HOUSEWIFE MURDER CASE IS CLOSED.
AND YOU STILL SUSPECT SATOSHI-KUN OF THE MURDER?
UNFORTUNATELY, WHEN INVESTIGATING THE SCENE, WE COULDN'T FIND A SINGLE CLUE TO IDENTIFY THE CULPRIT
YES.
YES. THE INSTINCTS OF A MAN WHO'S EARNED HIS BREAD AND BUTTER THIS WAY FOR DECADES.
HOW CAN YOU BE SO INSISTENT ON CALLING SOMEONE A KILLER WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE A SHRED OF EVIDENCE?
IS IT YOUR "INTUITION" FROM SO MANY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE?
AFTER SATOSHI-KUN DISAPPEARED, WE GOT A WARRANT TO SEARCH HIS HOME. WE INSPECTED THE HOUSE BUT CAME UP WITH NADA.

I FIRMLY BELIEVED THAT ONE OF THE REASONS SATOSHI-KUN WENT MISSING WAS BECAUSE HE KILLED HIS AUNT.
IF HE ISN'T THE KILLER, THAT REASONING FALLS APART.
WHERE DID SATOSHI-KUN GO—?
THE MURDER OF HIS AUNT WAS A SEPARATE CRIME BY THAT DRUG ADDICT. IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SATOSHI-KUN'S DISAPPEARANCE
SATOSHI-KUN DISAPPEARED BECAUSE THE SONOZAKIS WERE TRYING TO TEAR US APART.
IT WAS UNRELATED TO THE MURDER OF HIS AUNT. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT THEORY?
HMM. I DON'T THINK THEY WOULD TAKE THE RISK OF MAKING SOMEONE DISAPPEAR OVER A LITTLE LOVE AFFAIR WITH A BITTER ENEMY.
DO YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT THAT, SHIONSAN?
IF I DID, I WOULDN'T BE HERE.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT SATOSHI-KUN'S DISAPPEARANCE OVER IN HINAMIZAWA?
NA-HA-HA! OF COURSE.
EH?

THEY SAY HE WAS "ABDUCTED BY DEMONS"...
I THINK PEOPLE ARE GETTING AHEAD OF THEMSELVES BUT THEY RE ALREADY WHISPERING ABOUT WHETHER IT WILL HAPPEN NEXT YEAR
IN ANY CASE THAT MAKES THIS THE FOURTH YEAR IN THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS
HE WAS TAKEN AWAY TO THE LAND OF DEMONS AT THE BOTTOM OF ONIGAFUCHI SWAMP? THAT'S ABSURD
AND IT'S NOT UNREASONABLE TO EXPECT THAT CURIOUS PEOPLE WILL SHOW UP WHEN THE COTTON DRIFTING ROLLS AROUND AGAIN.
THE DECEASED IS ONE OF THE HOJO FAMILY. IT'S NOT AS THOUGH SHE'S UNRELATED TO THE CRIMINALS OF THE DAM WAR.
SO THEY'RE SAYING THAT HIS AUNT WAS KILLED BECAUSE OF OY.SHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE?

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...I THOUGHT THAT THE FOURTH YEAR'S INCIDENT WAS A TRAGIC CRIME THAT SATOSHI-KUN COMMITTED BECAUSE HE WAS UNDER SO MUCH PRESSURE HE COULDN'T STOP HIMSELF...
UNTIL THAT DAY..
BUT..
...SATOSHI-KUN AND OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE..
...AND THAT IT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS BEFORE IT
...THERE WAS SOMEONE WHO MENTIONED BOTH OF THOSE THINGS

...IS A SIGN OF OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE.
EVERYTHING SATOSHI-KUN IS EXPERIENCING...
IT WAS ON THAT RAINY DAY.
YES.
THAT IT WAS "OYA-SHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE."
I'M SURE THAT'S WHAT RENA RYUGU SAID.
IF THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS IS SOMEBODY'S PLOT...
...THEN IT ALREADY WOULD HAVE BEEN DECIDED THAT THEY WOULD BE THE FOURTH YEAR'S VICTIMS.
BOTH HIS MURDERED AUNT AND SATOSHI-KUN
ARE FROM THE HOJO FAMILY—THE FAMILY THAT BETRAYED THE VILLAGE!

...TO PLANT THE IDEA OF KILLING HIS AUNT IN HIS HEAD.
SO THEY USED SATOSHI-KUN'S SITUATION.
...ERASED SATOSHI-KUN.
AND THAT SOMEONE...
SATOSHI-KUN FOLLOWED THEIR SCENARIO EXACTLY. HE KILLED HIS AUNT, WAS "ABDUCTED BY DEMONS," AND DISAPPEARED.
RENA'S WORDS TIED SATOSHI-KUN TO THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS
JUST AS IF HE HAD BEEN CONTROLLED BY OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE

RENA RYUGU
THEY LATER RETURNED TO HINA-MIZAWA
BEFORE SHE STARTED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, THEY MOVED TO IBARAKI
THE RYUGU FAMILY USED TO LIVE IN HINA-MIZAWA
THE ONE THING I KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT SHE HAS NO RELATION TO THE THREE FAMILIES
I DON'T KNOW THIS MYSTERIOUS GIRL'S TRUE IDENTITY
RENA RYUGU. REAL NAME: REINA RYUGU
SAYS THAT OYASHIRO-SAMA WOULD ALWAYS KEEP WATCH OVER HER AND THOSE FOOTSTEPS WOULD FOLLOW HER EVERYWHERE
RENA SAYS SHE WAS CURSED BY OYASHIRO-SAMA.
APPARENTLY SATOSHI-KUN ALSO SENSED...
...HE WAS BEING FOLLOWED BY AN UNKNOWABLE SOMETHING.

SOME-ONE FROM THE VILLAGE KEEPING AN EYE ON HIM RIGHT?
IT'S PROB-ABLY ...
WHY DID RENA AND SATOSHI-KUN HAVE THE SAME EXPERI-ENCE?
WHAT IS OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE?
BUT ...
WHY WOULD RENA HAVE BEEN UNDER SURVEIL-LANCE?
IT WOULDN'T BE UNREASON-ABLE FOR THEM, AFTER FEELING MORE AND MORE PERSECUTED, TO THINK THAT THEY WERE HAVING AN ABNORMAL EXPERIENCE
AND SATOSHI-KUN AND RENA, WHO BLINDLY BELIEVE IN OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE, WOULD HAVE FELT THAT WAS OYASHIRO-SAMA'S PRESENCE
I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THEY WOULD KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON THE ACTIONS OF EACH YEAR'S CURSE VICTIMS

IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN I DON'T KNOW WHAT SIGNIFICANCE THERE WOULD BE TO RENA'S HAVING BEEN WATCHED.
MY THEORY IS THAT THE SURVEILLANCE IS TO KEEP AN EYE ON THAT YEAR'S VICTIMS.
BUT IN THE END, SHE WASN'T SACRIFICED
MAYBE SHE WAS PARDONED BECAUSE HER FAMILY DECIDED TO MOVE BACK TO HINAMIZAWA.
WHY WOULD THEY BE WATCHING A GIRL WHO LIVED NOT IN HINAMIZAWA, BUT SOMEWHERE FAR AWAY?
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THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE WITH A DIFFERENT IDEA
WHILE RENA BLINDLY BELIEVES IN OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE
IF THEY SAW HER AS SOMEONE WHO ABANDONED THE VILLAGE, THEN IT WOULD MAKE SENSE FOR HER TO BE CURSED

MIYO TAKANO
SHE THOUGHT THAT THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS IN HINAMIZAWA WAS CAUSED BY PEOPLE.
UNLIKE RENA.
MIYO TAKANO.
EVERY YEAR, ONE PERSON DIES BY THE CURSE, AND ONE IS OFFERED AS A SACRIFICE AND DISAPPEARS.
EACH CASE SEEMS LIKE A UNIQUE INCIDENT, BUT THEY WERE CLEARLY CARRIED OUT BASED ON ONE SINGLE WILL.
THE VICTIMS ALWAYS COME IN TWOS?
THE VICTIMS OF THE MYSTERIOUS DEATHS ALWAYS COME IN PAIRS.
ONE PERSON DIES BY THE CURSE
YOU REALIZE WHAT THAT MEANS, DON'T YOU?
...AND ONE... WHAT?

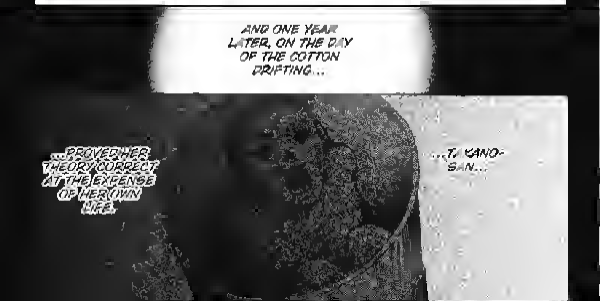
IN THE FIRST YEAR, THE DAM DIRECTOR DIED.
THAT WAS JUST ONE...
IN THE SECOND YEAR, IT WAS SATOSHI'S PARENTS. THAT MAKES TWO.
IN THE THIRD YEAR, IT WAS THE PRIEST.
AND IF HIS WIFE'S SUICIDE WAS PART OF THE PLOT, THAT WOULD BE TWO.
AND THE FOURTH YEAR, SATOSHI-KUN'S AUNT DIED, AND HE DISAP-PEARED.
TWO VIC-TIMS
IT'S TRUE EXCEPT FOR THE FIRST YEAR. IT'S ALWAYS AN EVEN NUMBER.
TWO PEOPLE
NO, WAIT.
THE RING-LEADER OF THE FIRST YEAR'S MURDER IS STILL MISSING. THAT MEANS...
...IT'S POSSIBLE HE WAS "ABDUCTED BY DEMONS" AND ERASED LIKE SATOSHI-KUN!!

SEE? IT'S TRUE
THE FIRST YEAR, THE RINGLEADER IN THE MURDER OF THE CONSTRUCTION DIRECTOR ESCAPED, AND NO ONE KNOWS WHERE HE IS.
THE SECOND YEAR, MRS. HOJO'S BODY NEVER SURFACED, AND THE THIRD YEAR, THEY NEVER FOUND THE BODY OF THE PRIEST'S WIFE.
AND NOW, IN THE FOURTH YEAR, SOMEONE HAS DISAPPEARED
OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE IS OYASHIRO-SAMA'S WRATH
OYASHIRO-SAMA WAS ANGERED, SO THE CURSE COMES AS PUNISHMENT.
AND WE MUSTN'T IGNORE THE CURSE...
...BECAUSE THAT WILL BRING ABOUT A MUCH, MUCH GREATER CURSE
FOR GENERATIONS EVERY TIME OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE STRUCK, THE LEADERS OF THE FURUDE FAMILY OF PRIESTS AND PRIESTESSES...
...NEEDED TO OFFER A SACRIFICE TO CALM OYASHIRO-SAMA'S WRATH

SO THE PEOPLE WHO DISAPPEARED ARE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SWAMP!?
OF COURSE THE BODIES WOULD NEVER BE FOUND.
SO... EVERY YEAR ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING, ONE PERSON DIES BY OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE...
THE SACRIFICIAL CEREMONY CONSISTS OF DROWNING THE VICTIMS IN ONIGAFUCHI SWAMP.
...AND THEY KILL ONE MORE PERSON TO APPEASE THE CURSE?
A BOTTOMLESS SWAMP OF WHICH IT IS SAID THAT ONCE SOMEONE HAS SUNKEN INTO IT, HE OR SHE WILL NEVER RETURN TO THE SURFACE
A DEAD BODY WOULD NEVER RESURFACE...
I NEVER HEARD THAT ANYONE WAS OFFERED AS A SACRIFICE.
EVEN SATOSHI-KUN...!?

WELL, I DON'T KNOW IF THEY REALLY ARE DROWNED IN THE SWAMP
...BUT I'M CERTAIN THAT WHOEVER'S BEHIND IT IS AWARE OF THAT PRACTICE AND ERASES SOMEONE.
BY REPEATING THE PROCESS EVERY YEAR, THEY'VE CREATED A SYSTEM FOR KILLING THEIR BITTER ENEMIES FROM THE TIME OF THE DAM WAR, TWO PER YEAR
YES. IN OTHER WORDS, THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS IN HINAMIZAWA COMES IN SETS— THE CURSE AND THE SACRIFICE
IT WENT BEYOND SOME PARANOIAC'S NOTEBOOK.
...HAD ALL KINDS OF QUOTES AND COPIES OF TEXTS
THE SCRAPBOOK TAKANO-SAN LENT ME...
IN OTHER WORDS, CRIMES BY FANATICAL OYASHIRO-SAMA WORSHIPPERS.
SHE PERCEIVED OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE AS AN EXTENSION OF THE OLD RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES.

AND TAKANO-SAN BELIEVED THAT THEY ARE WORKING IN THE SHADOWS TO TAKE BACK ONIGAFUCHI'S PRIDE AS IMMORTALS, A STATUS LOST AFTER THE MEIJI ERA.
AND THE THREE FAMILIES ARE SET UP AT ITS CORE.
THERE IS A FACTION, IN SHINAMIZAWA, THAT CENTERS AROUND THOSE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.
AND THEN ERASED BY BEING "ABDUCTED BY DEMONS"?
TO COMMIT MURDER
USED BY THE FAMILIES
WERE SATOSHI-KUN AND THE RINGLEADER OF THE DAM DIRECTOR'S KILLERS.


AND ONE YEAR LATER, ON THE DAY OF THE COTTON DRIFTING...
...PROVE HER THEORY CORRECT AT THE EXPENSE OF HER OWN LIFE.
...TAKANO-SAN...

THERE'S A STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT THERE WILL BE AN ORDER TO "DEMON AWAY" KEIICHI AND I, WHO SNUCK IN WITH THEM
TAKANO-SAN AND YOMITAKE-SAN SNUCK INTO THE FORBIDDEN SAIGUDEN OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE HAS ALREADY BEFALLEN THEM
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BUT...
キィィ
...I WON'T LET THEM GET ME!

NOT UNTIL I FIND OUT THE TRUTH ABOUT SATOSHI-KUN!

CHAPTER 13: REVENGE

SATOSHI-
KUN...
...YOU'VE
COME
BACK...

SATOSHI-KUN...
SATOSHI-KUN...
NGH...
SATOSHI-KUN... HIC...
SOB...

OH... I'M THE ONLY ONE IN THE HOUSE...
I HAVE TO GET THAT.
KIMIYOSHI? OJIICHAN?
I'm so sorry to call you this early in the morning. This is Kimiyoshi.
HELLO, SONOZAKI RESIDENCE.
YES IT SEEMS LAST NIGHT WAS QUITE HARD ON HER. I WOULD LIKE TO LET HER SLEEP AWHILE YET.
I HAVE TO ACT LIKE MION.
Mion-chan, is your grandma still asleep?

Yes, well, we've decided to hold an urgent board meeting in regards to YESTERDAY'S INCIDENT.
So will you tell her that we would like to get together at the shrine's meeting hall at five this evening?
Hmm, then might I ask you to take a message to her bedside?
YES. WHAT SHALL I TELL HER?
I UNDERSTAND I'LL TELL HER
HELLO, SONOZAKI RESI-DENCE
PUU
PUU CHIHO

I am terribly sorry to bother you so early in the morning. This is Kasai.
Is this Mion-san? Good morning, miss
KASAI... SAN. GOOD MORNING.
Is Shion-san still with you?
I CAN TELL HIM I'M NOT HERE.
OR, I CAN PLAY BOTH PARTS MYSELF.
SHION WAS JUST WASHING HER FACE. I'LL GO GET HER.
GOOD MORNING, KASAI!
Good morning, Shion-san. Will you be going to school today?
OF COURSE NOT. I'M EXHAUSTED.
I thought that might be the case.

So do you have a way to get back to Okino-miya?
HMM, I THINK I'LL HAVE KIMIYOSHI-OJIICHAN OR SOMEONE TAKE ME HOME
ANYWAY, KASAI HAVE YOU HEARD?
Heard what?
ABOUT YESTERDAY...
A little.. It's a terrible thing to happen.
DO YOU KNOW WHY LAST NIGHT'S VICTIMS MET WITH OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE, KASAI?

...NO.
ACCORDING TO SOMETHING I HAPPENED TO HEAR YESTERDAY...
...THEY SNUCK INTO THE SAIGUDEN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE COTTON DRIFTING FESTIVAL.
KASAI...
GUNJUN
GUNJUN
GUNJUN

...NN...
AH-HA-HA-HA... WELL, TAKANO-SAN AND TOMITAKE-SAN WERE OUTSIDERS WHO DIDN'T REALLY UNDERSTAND.
YOU TOO, KA-SAI?
NO ...
I see...
That was foolish...
...THAT TRESPASSING IN THE SAIGUDEN = BECOMING THE FIFTH YEAR'S VICTIMS.
HE READILY ACCEPTED THE EQUATION...

You went inside the Saiguden?
AND HEY KASAI...
YES TAKANO-SAN ASKED ME IF I'D LIKE TO JOIN THEM...
AND THAT KEIICHI BOY WHO MOVED INTO MAEBARA MANOR CAME TOO. THERE WERE FOUR OF US.
...ACTUALLY, I DID TOO.

Shion-san... After everything that happened last year..
...how do you plan on making restitution this time?
Oh.

Shion-san, you are technically related to the Sonozaki family.
Do you still think that that excuse will work?
H-HEY, EVEN I HAD SOME IDEA THAT THAT PLACE WAS TROUBLE!!
BUT C'MON! IS IT REALLY THAT BAD!?
Shion-san... I'd like to think I'm on your side. I want to believe in you the best I can.
Sigh...
BUT...I WAS IN OKINOMIYA THE WHOLE TIME! EVER SINCE ONI-BABA DECIDED SHE DOESN'T LIKE ME, I'VE HARDLY COME NEAR HINAMIZAWA AT ALL!
But some things have consequences even I can't protect you from.
AND ON TOP OF THAT, I WAS LOCKED UP AT THE ACADEMY! HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO KNOW ABOUT THAT STUFF!?

GACHA (CLICK)
First of all, Shi—
ONEE'S HERE, SO I'M HANGING UP NOW!
AH-HA-HA! I'M SORRY!

I DIDN'T WANT TO HEAR IT.
I DIDN'T WANT TO HEAR HIM REJECT ME!
KASAI HAD ALWAYS BEEN ON MY SIDE, NO MATTER WHAT.
HA
SIGH (EXHALE)
HAAH...

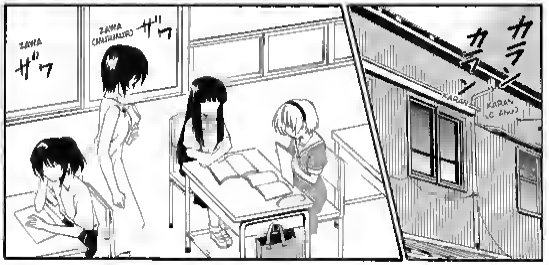
TCH.
TA HA HA HA.
OH MAN...

KYU (SQUEAK)
PACHA
PACHA
PACHA (SPLISH)
WHY ARE YOU PANICKING NOW?
CALM DOWN
YOU'VE ALREADY STARTED DOWN THIS PATH. THERE'S NO GOING BACK.
YOU'VE ALREADY KILLED ONI-BABA.

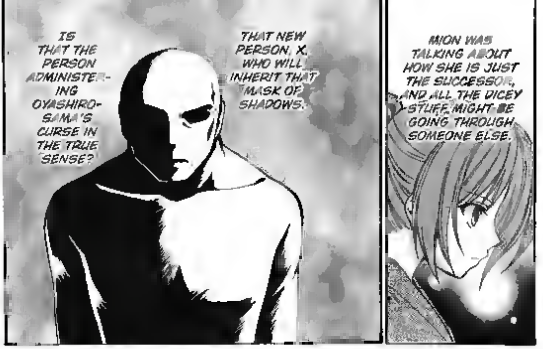
MY DESTINY WILL BE OVER BEFORE LONG
THEY CAN'T PUNISH ME WITH ANYTHING BUT DEATH
NOW THAT I'VE KILLED ONI-BABA
THAT'S RIGHT. I'LL MAKE RESTITU-TION.
IN THAT CASE
I WON'T DIE SO EASILY
I'LL STRUGGLE, AND STRUGGLE, AND STRUGGLE SOME MORE.

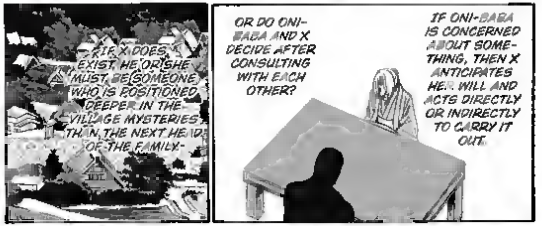
AND I CAN HIDE THAT MION IS GONE BY BECOMING MION MYSELF
キィ (CREAK)
I CAN TELL EVERYONE SHE'S BEDRIDDEN AFTER PUSHING HERSELF TOO HARD AT THE COTTON DRIFTING. THAT SHOULD BE ENOUGH.
I CAN COVER UP ONI-BABA'S DEATH FOR A LITTLE WHILE
IF I BECOME MION, THEN SHION WILL DISAPPEAR
I JUST TOLD KASAI THAT SHION WENT INTO THE SAIGUDEN, SO EVERYONE WILL THINK SHE WAS "ABDUCTED BY DEMONS" BECAUSE OF OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE.
IN THAT CASE, ALL THAT'S LEFT IS THE LAST OF THE FOUR WHO SNUCK INTO THE SAIGUDEN

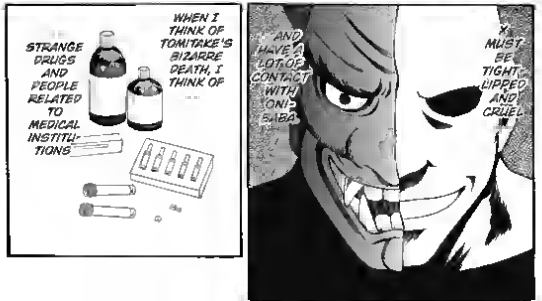
KEIICHI MAEBARA ...!
OH. GOOD MORNING, MION.

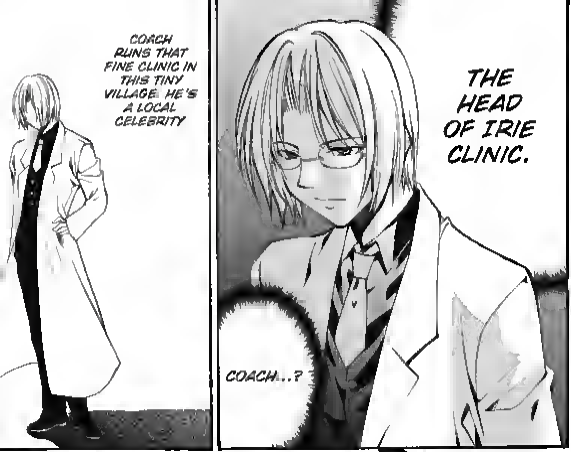

ZAWA ZAWA
ZAWA ZAWA
ガラ ガラ ガラ ガラ

THE ENEMY WILL FOCUS THEIR ATTACKS ON THE LAST ONE, KEIICHI MAE-BARA

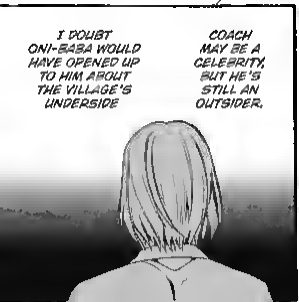

IS THAT THE PERSON ADMINISTERING OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE IN THE TRUE SENSE?
THAT NEW PERSON, X, WHO WILL INHERIT THAT "MASK OF SHADOWS."
MION WAS TALKING ABOUT HOW SHE IS JUST THE SUCCESSOR, AND ALL THE ICKY STUFF MIGHT BE GOING THROUGH SOMEONE ELSE.


IF X DOES EXIST, HE OR SHE MUST BE SOMEONE WHO IS POSITIONED DEEPER IN THE VILLAGE MYSTERIES THAN THE NEXT HEIR OF THE FAMILY.
OR DO ONI-BABA AND X DECIDE AFTER CONSULTING WITH EACH OTHER?
IF ONI-BABA IS CONCERNED ABOUT SOMETHING, THEN X ANTICIPATES HER. WILL AND ACTS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY TO CARRY IT OUT.


STRANGE DRUGS AND PEOPLE RELATED TO MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS
WHEN I THINK OF TOMITAKE'S BIZARRE DEATH, I THINK OF
AND HAVE A LOT OF CONTACT WITH ONI-BABA.
X MUST BE TIGHT-LIPPED AND CRUEL.


COACH RUNS THAT FINE CLINIC IN THIS TINY VILLAGE. HE'S A LOCAL CELEBRITY
THE HEAD OF IRIE CLINIC.
COACH...?

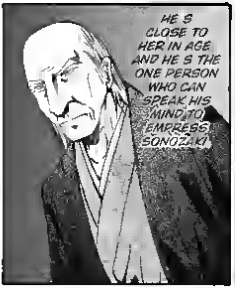
IF COACH IS THE ONE CARRYING OUT THE CURSE, THAT MIGHT EXPLAIN ALMOST ALL OF THE SUSPICIOUS CAUSES OF DEATH
THERE'S NOTHING AS SCARY AS A HOMICIDAL DOCTOR


I DOUBT ONI-BABA WOULD HAVE OPENED UP TO HIM ABOUT THE VILLAGE'S UNDERSIDE
COACH MAY BE A CELEBRITY, BUT HE'S STILL AN OUTSIDER.

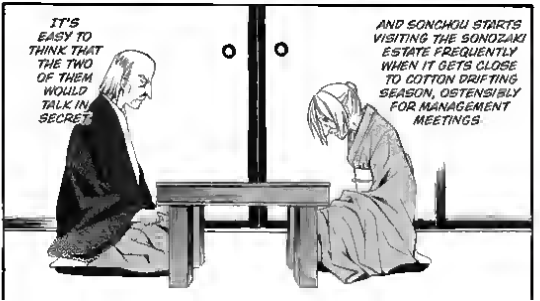
ONI-BABA HATES YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE HIM. SHE WOULDN'T HAVE TRUSTED HIM
BUT THERE'S ALMOST NO CHANCE THAT HE IS X.

THE FIRST PEOPLE I THINK OF ARE THE HEADS OF THE THREE FAMILIES

IF I KNOW ONI-BABA THEN EVERY-ONE INVOLVED IN THE DARK SIDE WOULD BE SOMEONE SHE COULD TRUST


HE'S CLOSE TO HER IN AGE AND HE'S THE ONE PERSON WHO CAN SPEAK HIS MIND TO EMPRESS SONOZAKI

BUT I CAN BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE SONCHOU, THE HEAD OF THE KIMIYOSHI FAMILY
THE HEAD OF THE FURUDE FAMILY IS RIKA-CHAMA. NEVER MIND HER.


IT'S EASY TO THINK THAT THE TWO OF THEM WOULD TALK IN SECRET.
AND SONCHOU STARTS VISITING THE SONOZAKI ESTATE FREQUENTLY WHEN IT GETS CLOSE TO COTTON DRIFTING SEASON, OSTENSIBLY FOR MANAGEMENT MEETINGS.

I HAVE TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO CATCH THEM RED-HANDED WHEN THEY GO AFTER KEIICHI!
THE ENFORCER OF OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE...
I HAVE TO WATCH OVER KEIICHI VERY CLOSELY!
SENSEI
I'M NOT FEELING VERY WELL...
MAY I GO HOME EARLY?

ザバ
ZAPA
ザバ
ZAPA (SPLASH)

SFX: PACHA (SPLASH) PACHA
THEN IT WILL BE EASIER TO SENSE WHEN THE DANGER IS CLOSING IN ON HIM.
KEI-CHAN.
THE INVESTIGATIONS OF THE CASES RELATING TO THE CURSE ARE TOP SECRET, SO KEIICHI PROBABLY DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING.
IF I TELL HIM THE POSITION HE'S IN, HE SHOULD START BEING MORE CAREFUL TOO

HA-HA... I'M GOING HOME EARLY! MY HEAD IS THROBBING SO SENSEI GAVE THE OKAY
YOU SERIOUS!?
MION YOU HERE TO WASH YOUR FACE TOO?
I KNEW YOU'D CHOOSE THE OUTSIDE FAUCET, KEI-CHAN.
HEH-HEH! IT DOES FEEL BETTER BEING OUTSIDE, AFTER ALL.
PITA
OH, YOU'RE RIGHT YOU ARE A LITTLE WARM
HYA !!
A-ACTUALLY, AT THE PARTY AFTER THE FESTIVAL, I HAD A LITTLE—
YOU HAVE A HANGOVER!? I SHOULDN'T HAVE BOTHERED WORRYING!
AH, OH YE...H. I KINDA WANTED TO ASK YOU SOMETHING.
NN?
WELL, TAKE CARE WALKING HOME.
WILL DO.

LAST NIGHT. ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING...
...YOU DIDN'T SEE TAKANO-SAN AND TOMITAKE-SAN, DID YOU?
HMM. IT LOOKS LIKE HE FEELS AT LEAST A LITTLE GUILTY ABOUT YESTERDAY.
I-I DON'T KNOW...? DID I?
MAYBE I DID, BUT MAYBE I DIDN'T.
...I BET HE'D JUST HAVE SAID "HMM" AND CLAMMED UP.
I WONDER HOW SATOSHI-KUN WOULD HAVE BEEN...
BUT HE COULDN'T BE ANY WORSE AT LYING AND ACTING.

...YOU...
...ASKED ME THAT LAST NIGHT, DIDN'T YOU?
THEN I HAVE ONE MORE QUES-TION...
...ABOUT LAST NIGHT AGAIN. YOU DIDN'T SEE SHION, DID YOU?
EH? MION ASKED THAT YESTERDAY?
I...TOLD YOU, I DON'T KNOW IF I SAW HER OR NOT...
DOES THAT MEAN SHE CONFRONTED HIM AFTER WE LEFT THE SAIGUDEN?
MION...WHEN I ASKED, YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T KNOW WE HAD BEEN IN THE SAIGUDEN.

I THOUGHT THAT IF I ASKED YOU AGAIN, I MIGHT GET A DIFFERENT ANSWER.
SHE LUNGED
WHY DO YOU CARE SO MUCH ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT I SAW HER !?
... WHY !?

NO BIG REASON.
THERE ARE PEOPLE SAYING BAD THINGS ABOUT TOMITAKE-SAN, TAK..NO-SAN, SHION, AND YOU, KEI-CHAN...
BUT I DON'T BELIEVE YOU WOULD DO ANYTHING WRONG, KEI-CHAN.
SEE YOU LATER! BYE-BYE!

OH, SHIMIKO-SAN. IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?
OH MION-CHAN THANK GOODNESS I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO
THAT'S THE MAID SHIMIKO-SAN, IS IT?
IT MUST BE BATCHA APPARENTLY SOMETHING HAPPENED AT THE COTTON DRIFTING FESTIVAL THAT SHE WASN'T TOO HAPPY ABOUT, AND SHE'S IN A BAD MOOD
OH..
THE GATE IS LOCKED SO I CAN'T GET IN AND WHEN I CALL, NO ONE PICKS UP
TOTO
SFX (3RD CYLINDER) TWO
OH.. OH REALLY? ALL RIGHT
WE'LL CALL YOU WHEN SHE'S FEELING BETTER, SO WOULD YOU TELL ALL THE OTHER SERVANTS THAT THEY DON'T HAVE TO COME IN UNTIL THEN?

THIS EVENING, THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE A BOARD MEETING AT THE FURUDE SHRINE MEETING HALL
I'LL ATTEND IN ONI-BABA'S PLACE
I HAVE TO REENERGIZE AS MUCH AS I CAN
KACHI CHIKA
7:14
I HAVE TO CALL KEIICHI BEFORE THAT
THIS TIME I'LL CONTACT HIM AS SHION AND SUGGEST THAT WE PUT UP A UNITED FRONT
I SHOOK UP HIS TRUST AND INSTILLED A PALPABLE SENSE OF DANGER IN HIM DURING OUR LAST CONVERSATION

I WON'T LET HIM GET AWAY FROM ME...!
THE ENEMY I COULD NOT FIND, NO MATTER WHERE I LOOKED...
...IS ABOUT TO COME OUT OF HIDING!
I WILL EXPOSE HIM!
SATOSHI-KUN IS KILLER...!
THE EVIL THAT IS AFTER HIM IS THE ONE BEHIND THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS IN HINAMIZAWA.

CHAPTER 14
THIS IS THE YOUNGER SONOZAKI. DO YOU HAVE TIME RIGHT NOW?
HELLO, KEI-CHAN?
Sorry. My parents are kind of waiting for a call. I can't talk long.
THERE'S SOMETHING I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT, BUT IF YOU CAN'T STAY ON THE PHONE, THEN I GUESS WE'LL HAVE TO HANG UP.
LET'S MEET SOMEWHERE AND TALK.

CHAPTER 14: BLIND FOLLOWERS

SHISHIBONE PUBLIC LIBRARY. ALMOST NO ONE USES IT, SO IT'S PERFECT FOR WHEN I WANT TO BE ALONE.
I OFTEN CAME HERE TO THINK RIGHT AFTER SATOSHI-KUN DISAPPEARED LAST YEAR, DIDN'T I?
KEI-CHAN!

...AND NOW, I AM GOING TO PASS IT ON TO KEIICHI.
TAKANO-SAN TAUGHT ME HINA-MIZAWA'S HISTORY HERE A YEAR AGO...

WE ALL HELP EACH OTHER AS RELATIVES AND BACK UP EACH OTHER'S UNDER-TAKINGS.
EVEN IN OKINOMIYA, THERE ARE A LOT OF BUSINESSES RUN BY SONOZAKIS.
THE SONOZAKI FAMILY HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN OLD HINAMIZAWA FAMILY.
BUT WE HAD A LOT OF SUCCESSFUL ENTER-PRISES AFTER THE WAR, AND OUR INFLUENCE GREW ENORMOUSLY.
IS THIS GOD'S WAY OF BEING IRONIC?

KEIICHI GREW UP IN THE CITY.
SO HE MIGHT NOT UNDERSTAND THAT OLD FAMILIES HAVE ENTIRE REGIONS UNDER THEIR THUMB.
IF I DON'T LET HIM KNOW JUST HOW POWERFUL THE WILL OF THE SONOZAKI FAMILY IS...
HE PROBABLY WON'T BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT KIND OF DANGER HE'S IN
WE'RE ESPECIALLY STRONG IN FINANCE AND REAL ESTATE.
THERE ARE ALSO SONOZAKIS ON THE CITY COUNCIL AND THE PREFECTURAL ASSEMBLY.
W-WAIT A MINUTE!
ARE YOU SAYING THAT AROUND HERE, THE SONOZAKI FAMILY...
...IS REALLY INFLUENTIAL...?
KU
KU
KU
COLLAPSE
I THINK I'M GETTING TO WHERE I CAN EXPLAIN WHAT KIND OF A PERSON MION SONOZAKI, THE NEXT HEAD OF THE FAMILY, IS
THEN I'LL LINK IT ALL TO OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE.
YES, THEY'RE QUITE INFLUENTIAL!

WHAT IS HE DOING HERE!?
OOISHI!!
DID HE SPOT US IN TOWN AND FOLLOW US HERE?
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU THOUGHT, I WISH YOU WOULDN'T HAVE INTERRUPTED
HELLO, HELLO. MIGHT YOU BE ON A DATE TODAY?
WHAT TERRIBLE TIMING! THIS CAN'T BE A COINCIDENCE!
TO ASK ME OR KEIICHI ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED YESTERDAY!?

IN OTHER WORDS, KEIICHI AND ME!
THERE MUST HAVE BEEN A LOT OF PLAIN-CLOTHES COPS AT THE FESTIVAL.
THERE'S NO DOUBT, THEY MUST KNOW WHO THE LAST PEOPLE TO HAVE SEEN THE VICTIMS ARE.
TWO-TIMING THE SONOZAKI SISTERS YOU'RE QUITE THE TOUGH GUY.
JUDGING BY HIS ATTITUDE, HE MUST BE AFTER KEIICHI!?
I DON'T WANT HIM TO PLANT ANY WEIRD IDEAS IN KEIICHI'S MIND
I DON'T LIKE THE WAY THIS IS GOING
AT THIS RATE, OOISHI MIGHT MENTION MY RELATIONSHIP WITH SATOSHI-KUN
N-NO, I'M NOT TWO-TIMING RIGHT, SHION!?
DOES THAT MEAN HE THINKS IT WILL BE EASIER TO GET INFORMATION OUT OF KEIICHI IF HE'S ALONE…!?

HIM!!
IS HE MAKING THIS UNCOMFORTABLE FOR ME ON PURPOSE!?
IF YOU DON'T LEAVE, I'LL EXPOSE EVEN WORSE.
...IS THAT WHAT HE'S SAYING?
DAMMIT!
YOU OLD TANU-KI!!

SH-SHION!
WELL, I'LL CALL YOU LATER TONIGHT!
OH, I NEED TO BE GETTING TO WORK SOON.

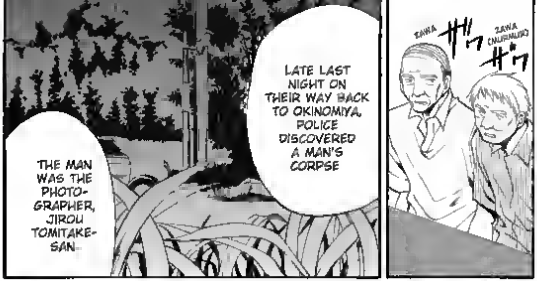
(SIGH)
(SIDE GLANCE)

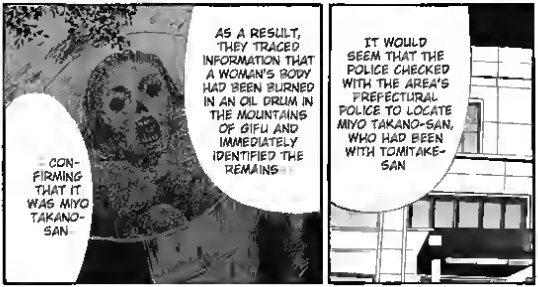
...BUT THE NEXT TIME WILL BE DIFFERENT!
HE MAY HAVE PULLED ONE OVER ON ME TODAY...

TODAY'S BOARD MEETING WILL BE JUST AS TENSE AS A SONOZAKI FAMILY MEETING
KANG
KANG
KANG
KANG
YES, A MEETING OF EVERYONE WHO KNOWS HINAMIZAWA'S SECRETS!
I CAN'T LET MY GUARD DOWN FOR A SECOND...
OH? IS THAT YOU, MION-CHAN?

THE HEAD OF THE KIMIYOSHI FAMILY AND ELDER OF HINA-MIZAWA VILLAGE
KIMIYOSHI-OJIICHAN
HE'S SEEN KIND TO ME EVER SINCE I WAS LITTLE.
BUT...
YES. BATCHA ISN'T FEELING WELL.
IS IT JUST YOU TODAY, MION-CHAN?
「IT'S ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT HE'S INVOLVED WITH OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE」!

IF THERE'S ANYTHING ORYOU-SAN TOLD YOU, THEN YOU CAN TELL US ALL ABOUT IT.
I SEE... SO IS IT SAFE TO SAY YOU'RE THE ACTING HEAD OF THE SONOZAKI FAMILY TODAY?
HAVE YOU ALL HEARD ABOUT THE EVENTS OF LAST NIGHT...?
WELL THEN, I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN TODAY'S PROCEEDINGS.


LATE LAST NIGHT ON THEIR WAY BACK TO OKINOMIYA, POLICE DISCOVERED A MAN'S CORPSE
THE MAN WAS THE PHOTO-GRAPHER, JIROU TOMITAKE-SAN.
TANA
TANA (NAKANUDO)


AS A RESULT, THEY TRACED INFORMATION THAT A WOMAN'S BODY HAD BEEN BURNED IN AN OIL DRUM IN THE MOUNTAINS OF GIFU AND IMMEDIATELY IDENTIFIED THE REMAINS.
CON-FIRMING THAT IT WAS MIYO TAKANO-SAN.
IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE POLICE CHECKED WITH THE AREA'S PREFECTURAL POLICE TO LOCATE MIYO TAKANO-SAN, WHO HAD BEEN WITH TOMITAKE-SAN

MION-CHAN DID ORYOU-SAN SAY ANYTHING?
SHIN (SILENCE)

SAGA
CHABANA

THEY'RE ALL LOOKING OVER MY SHOULDER AT ONI-BABA...
REMEMBER!
REMEMBER THE MOON WHO LOOKED AT ME WITH THOSE FROZEN EYES A YEAR AGO—
AND FORCED ME TO DO SUCH A TERRIBLE THING AS IF IT DIDN'T BOTHER HER AT ALL.
THAT'S INSIDE ME TOO...!
I AM MION SONOZAKI, ACTING HEAD OF THE SONOZAKI FAMILY.
I AM HERE TODAY IN THE PLACE OF ORYOU, THE TRUE HEAD OF THE FAMILY.

DO YOU KNOW WHY THE CURSE HAPPENED AGAIN THIS YEAR?
UNFORTUNATELY, OYASHIRO-SAMA'S WRATH HAS BEEN INCURRED FOR A FIFTH YEAR.
THAT'S RIGHT.
IT WAS BECAUSE THEY TRESPASSED INTO THE SAIGUDEN. THEIR FILTHY FEET DEFILING THE HOLY GROUND
LAUGHING

HOW COULD THEY!!?
TEARING OUT THEIR ENTRAILS WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH FOR THOSE BRATS!

THEY BROUGHT IT ON THEM-SELVES!
OYASHIRO-SAMA, PLEASE CALM YOUR WRATH.
THIS IS WHY I HATE OUT-SIDERS!!
IT'S NO WONDER THEY WERE CURSED!!

EVERYONE HERE IS A BLIND BELIEVER IN OYASHIRO-SAMA, JUST LIKE ONI-BABA ...!!
EVEN IF THEY DIDN'T DO ANYTHING THEMSELVES, THEY WOULD DEFINITELY LOOK THE OTHER WAY WHILE IT HAPPENED.
THEY WOULDN'T HESITATE TO DO ANYTHING FOR OYASHIRO-SAMA, SUCH AS PLANNING TO EXECUTE SOMEONE WHO INCURRED OYASHIRO-SAMA'S WRATH.
...MY "DEMON ABDUCTION" WOULD BE COMPLETE ...
...THEN IF EVERYONE WERE TESTIFIED MOM WASN'T AT THE MEETING TODAY...
THAT'S RIGHT, EVEN IF SOMEONE STRANGLED ME RIGHT HERE IN FRONT OF THEM

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT!
THE PERSON LINKING ONI-BABA AND THE CURSE IS IN THIS ROOM!

QUIET, PLEASE.
HEY! QUIET!
THERE WERE FOUR CROOKS WHO SNUCK INTO THE SAIGUDEN.
TWO ARE LEFT

AND THOSE SCOUNDRELS ARE
...SHION SONOZAKI... AND KEIICHI MAEBARA!
SHION SONOZAKI HAS ALREADY ...
GRRR (CLENCHED)

NOT YET...
HE'S SO DEADPAN...
THE SHION HE LOVED SO DEARLY HAS BEEN DEMONED AWAY...
...BUT HE DOESN'T EVEN BLINK.
WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER ONE—KEIICHI MAEBARA?

OYASHIRO-SAMA WILL BRING THE CURSE UPON ALL FOUR WHO DEFILED THE SAIGUDEN
KEIICHI MAEBARA WILL BE NO EXCEPTION...
KIMIYOSHI-SAN...
...WILL YOU STOP BY MY HOUSE?
BATCHA WILL BE HERE AFTER SHE GETS DRESSED...

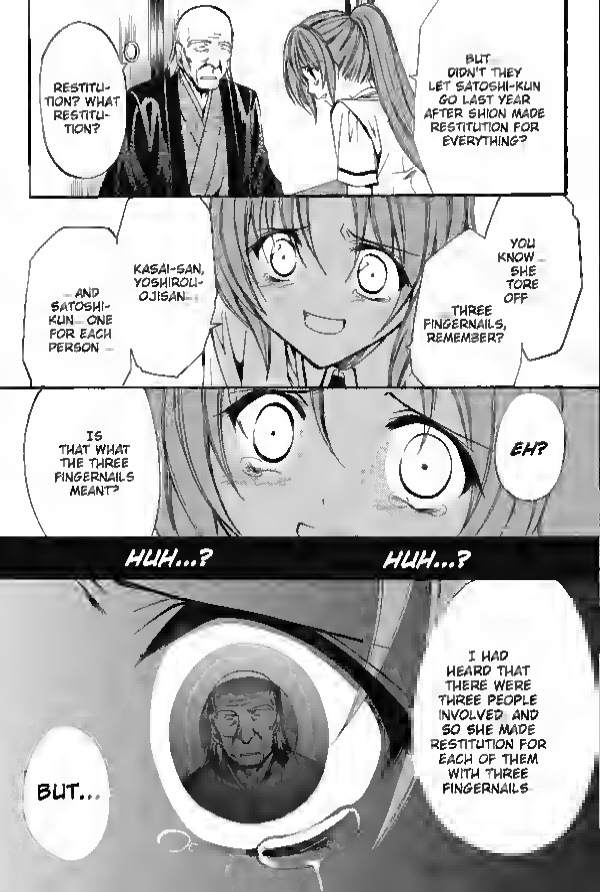
SHION-CHAN. WHERE IS SHE NOW?
I THINK IT MIGHT BE ABOUT SHION
KITCHEN COUNTER
UNDER-GROUND
SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN KEPT AWAY FROM HINAMI-ZAWA
BUT I THINK I FEEL SORRY FOR SHION
SHE MUST HAVE KNOWN THAT THE SAIGUDEN WAS SACRED, BUT SHE PROBABLY DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD BE THAT BAD
I SEE. OF COURSE SHE DID ENTER THE SAIGUDEN, AFTER ALL
I DO PITY HER.
INDEED.

WITHOUT SEEING THE TATTOO ON MY BACK, HOW WOULD ANYONE BE ABLE TO TELL ME APART FROM SHION?
THERE'S HARDLY EVEN A POINT IN MAKING THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN US
EVEN IF SHION HASN'T BEEN KILLED, SHE'LL PROBABLY NEVER SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY
SHE'LL BE TORMENTED
IN OTHER WORDS, I THINK SHE'S BEEN "ABDUCTED BY DEMONS."
SURELY SHION-CHAN IS SORRY FOR WHAT SHE'S DONE...?
CLANG
CLANG

IT'S ALL RIGHT. IF SHION-CHAN IS REALLY SORRY, SHE WON'T BE ABDUCTED BY DEMONS.
LEAVE IT TO YOUR KIMIYOSHI-OJIICHAN
W-WILL SHE REALLY BE OKAY...?
SHE WON'T BE ABDUCTED BY DEMONS LIKE SATOSHI HOJO-KUN WAS LAST YEAR...?
IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT. I'LL ASK ORYOU-SAN TO FORGIVE HER

THE ONE PERSON WHO
HE'S THE ONE PERSON WHO SAID HE WOULD FORGIVE SHION
KIMIYOSHI-OJIICHAN REALLY IS ON MY SIDE

I CAN'T SPEAK FOR THAT ACCURSED HOJO BOY...
...BUT SHION-CHAN IS A SONOZAKI. I'M SURE SHE'LL BE FORGIVEN.
HUH...?
IT'S ONLY TO BE EXPECTED THAT EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM IS CURSED. IT'S PEOPLE LIKE THAT WHO GET ABDUCTED BY DEMONS.
THERE'S NO HOPE FOR THOSE HOJOS. THEY TRIED TO SELL THE WHOLE VILLAGE.
HUH? HUH? HUH?


RESTITUTION? WHAT RESTITUTION?
BUT... DIDN'T THEY LET SATOSHI-KUN GO LAST YEAR AFTER SHION MADE RESTITUTION FOR EVERYTHING?
YOU KNOW... SHE TORE OFF THREE FINGERNAILS, REMEMBER?
KASAI-SAN, YOSHIROU-OJISAN... ...AND SATOSHI-KUN... ONE FOR EACH PERSON...
EH?
IS THAT WHAT THE THREE FINGERNAILS MEANT?
HUH...?
HUH...?
I HAD HEARD THAT THERE WERE THREE PEOPLE INVOLVED AND SO SHE MADE RESTITUTION FOR EACH OF THEM WITH THREE FINGERNAILS
BUT...

...THE THREE WERE KASAI-SAN, YOSHI-ROU-SAN...
...AND SHION-CHAN. THAT'S WHAT I HEARD.
HUH...?

THAT HURT TERRIBLY...
...AND I PUT UP WITH IT...
I MEAN, I HAD TO ENDURE IT UNTIL I HAD TORN OFF ALL THREE. I DIDN'T KNOW WHICH FINGERNAIL WOULD COUNT FOR SATOSHI-KUN. IF THE FINGERNAIL THAT WOULD HAVE SAVED SATOSHI-KUN WAS THE THIRD ONE AND I DIDN'T ENDURE IT TO THE VERY END, THEY WOULDN'T HAVE FORGIVEN HIM.
SO I GRIT MY TEETH AND BORE IT.
I MEAN...
...MION CAME OVER AFTERWARD AND TOLD ME.
SHE SAID EVERYTHING HAD BEEN FORGIVEN...
HUH...?
HUH?
MION-CHAN...?

...BUT SATOSHI-KUN WAS JUST THEIR SON. THAT'S ALL...
WHAT DID HE DO WRONG...?
YUKA SAKONJI
...WHY WAS SATOSHI-KUN DEMONED AWAY?
IT'S TRUE THAT SATOSHI-KUN'S PARENTS TRIED TO SELL OUT THE VILLAGE...
EH?
WE MAY HAVE DISCUSSED THE MATTER OF THE HOJOS BEING CURSED IN GENERAL TERMS
OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE WILL EVENTUALLY STRIKE THE HOJOS
...BUT NO ONE'S EVER SAID OR DONE ANYTHING AS CLEAR AS THAT
WAIT, MION-CHAN
WHY AM I ASKING? I KNOW WHY IT'S WHAT THE THREE FAMILIES DECIDED
IT'S NOT AS IF IT'S SET IN STONE
THEY DECIDED THAT THOSE WITH THE LAST NAME HOJO MUST BE THE ONES TO MEET WITH OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE

SO WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY "I CAN'T SPEAK FOR THAT HOJO BOY"?
OH, I'M SORRY, MION-CHAN.
THAT WAS— I WENT TOO FAR I APOLOGIZE!
I SEE HOW IT IS. WHATEVER HAPPENS TO A HOJO, IT'S THE CURSE.
WHETHER OR NOT SATOSHI-KUN DID ANYTHING WRONG, AS LONG AS HE'S A HOJO, HE'S FILTH.
THE PROBLEM IS THAT IDEA HAS SPREAD LIKE A DISEASE.

I FEEL SO SORRY FOR SATOSHI-KUN. SO, SO SORRY FOR HIM. WHAT DID HE DO? HE DIDN'T DO ANY-THING. HE DIDN'T DO ANY-THING. HE WAS JUST A HOJO. WHY DID THAT GUILT, THAT PUNISH-MENT, THAT CURSE, THAT DAMNA-TION HAVE TO FALL ON HIM?
AND YOU'VE BEEN INFECTED BY THAT DISEASE, CONTAMI-NATED BY THOSE FILTHY IDEAS, AND YOU BLINDLY FOLLOW SUPERSTI-TIONS. I CAN'T FORGIVE YOU. I CAN'T ALLOW PEOPLE LIKE YOU TO EXIST. PEOPLE LIKE YOU DROVE SATOSHI-KUN'S FAMILY TO THE BRINK, TO THE BRINK.

WHAT THE HELL DID SATO-SHI-KUN DO WRONG !?
ピンポーン
ピンポーン
ピンポーン

HELLO, KEI-CHAN?
...I HEAR THAT TAKANO-SAN AND TOMITAKE-SAN DIED LAST NIGHT...
IT'S SHION
ACTUALLY

CHAPTER 15: LIVE

Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY
EYE OPENING ARC

CURRENTLY, THE INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS ARE ALL HIGHLY CLASSIFIED...
...SO OF COURSE THEY WOULDN'T BE IN THE NEWS.
AS EXPECTED, KEI-CHAN DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE MURDERS ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING.
CHIN (SIGH)
IN HINAMIZAWA AT SOME POINT, THEY CREATED A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN KILL ANYBODY IN THE NAME OF OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE, EVERY YEAR ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING.
NO MATTER WHO DIES ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING, IT WON'T BE MADE PUBLIC

THE AIRBORNE INFECTION. THE IDEA THAT IT'S ONLY NATURAL FOR THE ENEMIES FROM THE DAMN WAR TO DIE HAS BECOME THE MOTHER OF FORMLESS MURDERERS
EVERY SINGLE PERSON WHO SYMPATHIZED WITH ORYOU'S WISHES WOULD TRY TO MEET HER EXPECTATIONS IF ONLY GIVEN THE CHANCE
AT MEETINGS ORYOU EXPECTED THE CURSE TO STRIKE
ANYONE COULD BE THE ENFORCER
AND ACCOMPLICES
SO THEY ALL BECOME CO-CONSPIRATORS.

IF SOMEONE CAUSES AN INCIDENT, THEN THE OTHERS TRY TO MEET ORYOU'S EXPECTATIONS IN DIFFERENT WAYS—

..CREATING ALIBIS, HINDERING INVESTIGATIONS

THEY DON'T HAVE TO KNOW WHO REALLY DID IT

THEY ALL BAND TOGETHER TO PROTECT THAT PERSON.

I'VE JUST IDENTIFIED OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE. IT'S THE SYSTEM FOR CARRYING OUT THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS IN HINAMIZAWA!!
THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE SET UP THIS SYSTEM OF MURDER AND APPOINTED SATOSHI-KUN'S FAMILY AS THE ENEMY...
...THEY ARE THE ONES WITH SATOSHI-KUN'S BLOOD ON THEIR HANDS!!
THEY ARE THE OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE SYSTEM.
HINAMIZAWA ITSELF IS THE OBJECT OF MY REVENGE!!!

Hello, Kimiyoshi residence.
THIS IS SONOZAKI. HAVE YOU FOUND THE VILLAGE CHIEF?
It's no use. We can't find him.
Honestly. Where is he loafing about?
WE'VE ASKED AROUND EVERYWHERE WE COULD THINK OF TOO, BUT WE FOUND NOTHING.
BATCHA SAYS WE SHOULD ASSEMBLE THE YOUTH SQUAD AND HAVE THEM LOOK
IT'S RIGHT AFTER THE COTTON DRIFTING. SO ASK THEM TO BE DISCREET.
Uryuu-san said that?
YES. SO PLEASE START ALERTING THE MEMBERS OF THE YOUTH SQUAD.
I WILL BE HEADING OVER THERE TOO, REPRESENTING BATCHA
KAWA (RUSTLE)

KIMIYOSHI-OJIICHAN...
...HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
...NGH...
...NGH...

THE ENTIRE VILLAGE IS SEARCHING FOR YOU RIGHT NOW
NNGH
SHOULD I LENGTHEN THE CHAIN A LITTLE FOR YOU?
NGH ...
NGH ...

PLEASE TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT SATOSHI HOJO-KUN.
FOR EACH QUESTION YOU ANSWER, I'LL MAKE THE CHAIN ONE LINK LONGER
NNGH ...
OH, I'M SORRY.
YOU CAN'T TALK EVEN IF YOU WANT TO, CAN YOU?
I DON'T KNOW, SHION-CHAN.
I REALLY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING...

WELL, THE HINAMIZAWA CURSE SYSTEM DOES MAINTAIN ITS SECRECY IN THOSE ASPECTS, AFTER ALL
IT'S ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT YOU KNOW NOTHING
THEN I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOUR OPINION AS THE HEAD OF THE KIMIYOSHI FAMILY.
IS SATOSHI-KUN ALIVE?
OR IS HE DEAD?
I'VE HEARD RUMORS THAT HE'S ALIVE
THAT SOMEONE SAW HIM GET ON A BULLET TRAIN TO TOKYO—
AND THE POLICE SAW HIM IN TOKYO AFTER THAT—— THAT'S WHAT THE RUMORS SAY
SAY HONORABLE HEAD OF THE KIMIYOSHI FAMILY?

IF HE'S A MEMBER OF THE ACCURSED HOJO FAMILY...
...WHAT REASON COULD THERE BE TO LET HIM LIVE?
IF YOU'RE TELLING SOME HALF-BAKED LIE TO MAKE ME FEEL BETTER...
AND I'VE SECRETLY BEEN KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH OOISHI FOR A WHILE, BUT I NEVER HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT THAT.
I-I'M SORRY, SHION-CHAN!
I'LL GIVE IT SOME HONEST THOUGHT!
...MAKE ME ANGRY.
...THEN IT WILL ONLY ...

THEN DO YOU THINK HE'S ALIVE, OR DO YOU THINK HE'S DEAD?
I THINK IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT...
...TO ASSUME THAT HE'S ALIVE.
THERE'S NO POINT IN TAKING THE ENORMOUS RISK...
...THAT COMES WITH LETTING HIM LIVE
カツ
カツ
INDEED.

THE POLICE THINK THAT SATOSHI-KUN KILLED HIS AUNT
...THEN USED THE MONEY HE HAD SAVED UP FOR SATOKO'S BIRTHDAY PRESENT TO RUN AWAY. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
BUT I HEARD THAT THE KILLER WAS A DANGEROUS MAN ON DRUGS
WHAT DO YOU SAY ABOUT THAT?
I BELIEVE THAT SATOSHI-KUN KILLED HIS AUNT.
I THINK THE OTHER GUY WAS JUST A SCAPEGOAT.
...I THINK SO TOO.
IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE THAT HE WOULD SUDDENLY TELL EVERY-ONE THAT HE WAS THE REAL MURDERER.
SO HE WAS A SCAPE-GOAT?
I THINK HE PROBABLY WAS.
WHY DO YOU THINK THERE WOULD BE A SCAPE-GOAT?

IF SATOSHI-KUN WAS MEANT TO BE "ABDUCTED BY DEMONS" AND DISAPPEAR, THEY WOULDN'T HAVE LIKED HAVING THE POLICE OUT LOOKING FOR HIM
THE POLICE... THOUGHT SATOSHI-KUN WAS THE KILLER AND CONTINUED THEIR INVESTIGATION, DIDN'T THEY?
IMPOS-SIBLE FOR ANY-ONE BUT ORYOU-SAN.
...BUT IT'S NOT EASY TO INVENT A GUILTY PARTY.
INDEED ...
HMM. ONI-BABA, THE THREE FAMILIES AND THE OLD ALLIANCE REALLY WERE A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH WEREN'T THEY?
THAT'S SCARY... REALLY SCARY
WITH ORYOU-SAN'S INFLUENCE IN THE UNDER-WORLD, SHE CAN CREATE A GUILTY PARTY
YOU KNOW ABOUT THE KIDNAPPING OF THE MINISTER OF CONSTRUC-TION'S GRAND-SON DURING THE DAM WAR, DON'T YOU?
THAT WAS DONE UNDER ORYOU-SAN'S ORDERS

WHO DO YOU THINK CARRIED OUT SATOSHI-KUN'S "DEMON ABDUCTION"?
I DON'T KNOW
IT'S AN UNWRITTEN RULE THAT WE DON'T ASK WHO DID THE DEED...
I SEE. THAT'S THE KIND OF SYSTEM IT IS.
WELL, WHOEVER DID IT, IT'S PRETTY IMPRESSIVE THAT THEY COULD KILL SOMEONE AND MAKE SURE THE BODY WAS NEVER FOUND
REGARDLESS OF WHO KILLED HIM...
YOU KNOW THAT THERE'S A WELL FOR THROWING AWAY DEAD BODIES DEEP IN THE UNDER-GROUND CHAMBER WE'RE CURRENTLY STANDING IN, RIGHT?
...IT'S POSSIBLE THAT ORYOU-SAN HELPED TO DISPOSE OF THE BODY

IT CAN'T BE!
AT THE BOTTOM OF THAT WELL!?

HAA (HUFF)
HAA

SATOSHI-KUUUUN!!

KUUUUN
KUUUUN
...AT THE BOTTOM...?
IS SATOSHI-KUN...
FUWA
GYUU?
YOU FINALLY FOUND ME...

SATOSHI-KUN!!
SATOSHI-KUN!?
I'M SORRY I'M SORRY
BUT I COULDN'T FIND YOU WHILE YOU WERE ALIVE
I...I!
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU ALL THIS TIME!

I'M COMING TO JOIN YOU, SATOSHI-KUN!
SATOSHI-KUN!
I'M GOING TO JUMP DOWN. CATCH ME...
BUT AFTER I DIED...
..YOU DID EVERYTHING IN YOUR POWER.
YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG, SHION.
THERE WASN'T ANYTHING YOU COULD HAVE DONE BEFORE I WAS KILLED

WITHOUT YOU, SATOSHI-KUN, LIFE IS NOTHING!
YOU'RE ALIVE, SHION.
HMM
I WANT TO BE WITH YOU!
LIFE IS SOMETHING THAT YOU SHOULDN'T WASTE
IT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO LIVE
NEXT TIME
I'LL BE A CUTE GIRL WHO CAN BE HERSELF
I WANT TO BE WITH YOU FOREVER
I WANT YOU TO PAT MY HEAD AGAIN
I WANT TO SPEND TIME TOGETHER

WHAT'S SO FUN... ABOUT LIVING ALONE...?
LIVE...
LIVE...?
LIVE AND MAKE LOTS OF FUN MEMORIES, OKAY..?
YOU'LL FIND SOME-THING.
IF YOU LIVE...

...I WILL LIVE.
コッ KO
コッ KO
コッ KO (DEJADO)
I WILL LIVE...
...I'LL LIVE...

MION...
I FOUND SATOSHI-KUN...
HE'S.
...AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WELL ISN'T HE?
I THINK SO
YOU WEREN'T THERE WHEN THEY KILLED SATOSHI-KUN, WERE YOU?
NO.
IF YOU WERE THERE...
THAT'S THE ONLY PLACE HE COULD BE.
...WOULD YOU HAVE ASKED ONI-BABA TO LET HIM GO...?

I WOULD HAVE ASKED HER TO AT LEAST SPARE HIM HIS LIFE...!
I ABSO-LUTELY WOULD HAVE ...!
I DEFINITELY WOULD HAVE SAID THAT!!
SHION...
..YOU HAVE TO MAKE RESTITUTION..
RESTITUTION...

YOU'RE LYING!
YOU'RE LYING!
YOU'RE LYING!
YOU'RE LYING!!!

AND WHILE HE KNELT THERE, HOW HE MUST HAVE HOPED FOR SALVATION WHEN HE SAW MION'S FACE...
WHEN SATOSHI-KUN WAS BROUGHT TO THE TORTURE CHAMBER, HE MUST NOT HAVE EVEN FELT LIKE HE WAS ALIVE.
EVEN IF SHE HAD BEEN THERE WHEN THEY KILLED SATOSHI-KUN...
...SHE WOULD NEVER HAVE TAKEN OFF THE MASK OF THE NEXT HEAD OF THE FAMILY.
...BELIEVING...
...SURE SHE WOULD SAVE HIM...
SHE WOULD SAVE HIM
SURE SHE WOULD SAVE HIM AT ANY MOMENT
THAT MION HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO ACT COLD IN FRONT OF HER RELATIVES
SHE WOULD SAVE HIM

ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME YOU SAVED ME?
...YOU CAN'T SHOW ANY PERSONAL FEELINGS.
BECAUSE YOUR RELATIVES ARE WATCHING.
OH MAN...

HRRM...
AND WHEN SATOSHI-KUN WAS UNDER ALL THAT PRESSURE BECAUSE OF HIS AUNT...
HELP HIM!!
AAAA!
...YOU DIDN'T DO A THING TO SAVE HIM!
WHY!? WHY WON'T YOU HELP HIM!?
HELP HIM!!
YOU LET HIM DIE!!

IT WAS NOTHING, HAVING TO GIVE UP THREE FINGERNAILS FOR THAT!
EVEN WHEN YOU WOULDN'T DEFEND SATOSHI-KUN AFTER HE KILLED HIS AUNT! I GAVE MYSELF UP AND FOUGHT TO GIVE HIM AN ALIBI!
I TRIED HARD TO SAVE HIM!
IT DIDN'T HELP!!
BUT YOU KNOW, IT WASN'T NEARLY ENOUGH TO SAVE SATOSHI-KUN!
BECAUSE I...
...WAS SHION !!

SHION IS KEPT AWAY FROM HINAMIZAWA!
THEY NEVER TELL HER ANYTHING, SHE COULDN'T KNOW ANYTHING!
BUT YOU WERE DIFFERENT!!
YOU WERE MION!!!
YOU WERE INSIDE HINAMIZAWA, YOU WERE AT THE CENTER OF EVERYTHING, YOU COULD LEARN ANYTHING!!
IF I WERE MION, I'M SURE I COULD HAVE SAVED SATOSHI-KUN!!
I COULD HAVE SAVED HIM!!
GIVE HIM BACK!! MION!!!

...IN THE BEGINNING, MION WAS MINE!!
MION NEVER ONLY BELONGED TO YOU !!
SHE SHOULD HAVE BEEN MINE TOO!!
SHE WAS REALLY MINE!!
I JUST LENT HER TO YOU!
BE-SIDES ...

CHAPTER 16:
THE PRIESTESS OF OYASHIRO-SAMA

ろわま
YUWA OYAMA
OH!? MII-CHAN!
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU DIDN'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP. YOU DO
YEAH. I DIDN'T GET TO SLEEP UNTIL AROUND THREE.
IS IT BECAUSE OF THE VILLAGE CHIEF? THEY HAVEN'T FOUND HIM YET?
YEAH

AFTER WHAT HAPPENED YESTERDAY, I MET UP WITH THE YOUTH SQUAD AT FURUDE SHRINE. WE SPLIT UP AND LOOKED EVERYWHERE.
THERE'S NO WAY THEY'LL EVER FIND HIM.
PUHAA
AS THE ONLY PERSON WHO KNOWS THAT, NOTHING COULD MAKE ME SLEEPIER.
MAYBE I'LL TALK TO HIM AGAIN TONIGHT IN THE FORM OF A PHONE CALL FROM SHION.
KEIICHI MAESARA
JUST LOOKING AT HIM LIKE THIS, THERE'S NO WAY OF KNOWING IF THE DANGER IS CLOSING IN ON HIM OR NOT.
KYA
KYA (WHERE)

IZIKA FURUDE...
THE CURRENT HEAD OF THE FURUDE FAMILY
SHE'S ALWAYS NAPPING OR DOODLING OR SOMETHING AT THE FAMILY MEETINGS.
EVEN IF SHE WAS INVITED TO THE BOARD MEETING LAST NIGHT, IT DIDN'T LOOK LIKE SHE WAS THERE.
IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE A LITTLE GIRL LIKE HER COULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PART OF THE CLOSE SYSTEM AS A CORNER OF THE THREE FAMILIES TRIANGLE.
...THERE ARE A NUMBER OF ELDERLY VILLAGERS WHO BLINDLY FOLLOW IZIKA FURUDE AS THE REINCARNATION OF OYASHIRO-SAMA.
...BUT EVEN IF THEY DON'T DEMAND THE DIGNITY OF A FAMILY HEAD FROM HER...

APPARENTLY THERE ARE TIMES WHEN SHE ACTS LIKE SHE'S AWARE THAT SHE IS THE REINCARNATION OF OYASHIRO-SAMA
RIKA FURUDE HERSELF IS A LITTLE STRANGE SOMEHOW
I WONDER IF RIKA FURUDE KNOWS ABOUT TAKANO-SAN AND TOMITAKE-SAN'S DEATHS
WHAT ABOUT OUR SNEAKING INTO THE SAIGUDEN?
IF RIKA FURUDE IS CONCERNED ABOUT SOMETHING, THE ELDERLY BLIND FOLLOWERS WILL ANTICIPATE HER DESIRES
THE SCHEMATIC IS NO DIFFERENT THAN THE WAY ORDERS ARE GIVEN IN THE SONOZAKI FAMILY OR THE HINAMIZAWA CURSE SYSTEM

AS A FURUDE, A CARETAKER OF THE SAIGUDEN, THERE'S A STRONG CHANCE THAT SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN THE FIRST TO REALIZE THAT IT HAD BEEN BROKEN INTO.
AS THE HEAD OF THE FURUDE FAMILY, HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON?
DO YOU MEAN ABOUT TOMITAKE AND TAKANO, SIR?
MAYBE SHE WAS THE ONE WHO REPORTED THE BREAK-IN?
SHE DOES KNOW.
SO HER TITLE AS HEAD OF THE FURUDE FAMILY ISN'T JUST FOR SHOW

THEN IT'S NOT OVER YET. IS IT?
IT WAS OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE SIR. THAT'S ALL I CAN SAY.
THERE ARE TWO LEFT.
RIKA FURUDE...
...HOW WILL YOU TAKE THIS FATE?
HAVE YOU HEARD WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO THOSE TWO?

...DON'T REALLY CARE, SIR
I...
!?
DON'T YOU KNOW THAT THERE WON'T BE ANY RESTITUTION THAT WAY?
Y-YOU CAN'T NOT CARE.
HIKU
THAT'S NOTHING LIKE WHAT THE OLD MEN AT THE BOARD MEETING WERE SAYING!
IF THEY'RE SORRY, THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH ...?
I THINK IF THEY'RE REALLY SORRY FOR WHAT THEY DID, THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH, SIR.

...WAS CALLED A FENCE-SITTER DURING THE DAM WAR, WASN'T HE?
COME TO THINK OF IT, HER FATHER...
I SEE. SO THE APPLE DOESN'T FALL FAR FROM THE TREE...
YOU FURUDES MUST KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE JUST HOW SACRED THE SAIGUDEN IS!!
HOW CAN YOU BE SO INDIFFERENT!?

THE SAIGUDEN IS A PRECIOUS PLACE TO OYASHIRO-SAMA, SIR.
YOU CAN'T JUST GO INSIDE WHENEVER YOU WANT.

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU DON'T KNOW...
...HOW SERIOUS A CRIME IT IS TO DEFILE IT!

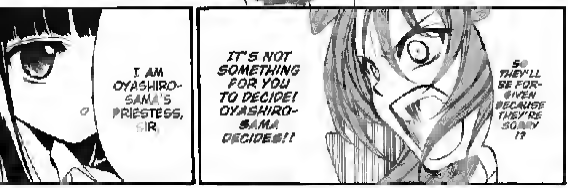
SO YOU DO KNOW-
THOSE FOUR DESECRAT-ED IT.

THEY WERE BAD CATS, SIR
MEOW

THAT'S RIGHT. BAD CATS
WE CAUGHT TWO OF THEM AND PUNISHED THEM.
THERE ARE TWO LEFT.
HOW SHOULD WE MAKE RESTITUTION? LET ME HEAR YOUR OPINION AS THE HEAD OF THE FURUDE FAMILY.
AND YOU THINK THAT WILL MAKE RESTITU-TION?
I WANT TO FORGIVE THE OTHER TWO CATS, SIR.
MII...
I DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND THE WORD "RESTITUTION," SIR.

OH, THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION
THEN LET'S HAVE A LESSON "RESTITUTION" MEANS MAKING UP FOR YOUR SINS
SO YOU HAVE TO MAKE RESTITUTION IN PROPORTION TO THE GREATNESS OF YOUR SINS, OR YOU WON'T BE CLEANSED OF THEM.
WE CAN'T LEAVE SINS AS THEY ARE. THAT WOULD BE IGNORING OYASHIRO-SAMA'S WRATH.
WHAT? WH..IT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
OYASHIRO-SAMA WON'T...
...GET MAD IF PEOPLE SEE THE SAIGUDEN.
IT'S BAD TO LOOK INSIDE BECAUSE IT'S FULL OF SCARY DEVICES, SIR.

I THINK THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO WOULD GET SCARED IF THEY SAW THEM, SIR.
THAT'S WHY WE MAKE SURE NOT TO LET THEM SEE.
I THINK THE PEOPLE WHO SAW INSIDE WERE SCARED.
SO I THINK THEY'RE SORRY FOR WHAT THEY DID, SIR.


I AM OYASHIRO-SAMA'S PRIESTESS, SIR.
IT'S NOT SOMETHING FOR YOU TO DECIDE! OYASHIRO-SAMA DECIDES!!
SO THEY'LL BE FORGIVEN BECAUSE THEY'RE SORRY!?

SO WHAT!? DID OYASHIRO-SAMA JUST TELL YOU, "I'M NOT MAD"?

HA! YOU APPALL ME!
GRIT (CLENCHED)
IT'S BECAUSE YOU FURUDES ARE ALL LIKE THAT THAT YOUR PARENTS DIED FROM THE CURSE TWO YEARS AGO!
OYASHIRO-SAMA WOULDN'T DO THAT SIR.
FATHER DIDN'T DIE BECAUSE OF THE CURSE
I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU'RE SO ANGRY, MII, SIR
SHE SHOULD KNOW JUST AS MUCH ABOUT THE DARK SIDE AS THE OTHER HEADS OF THE THREE FAMILIES..!
BUT SHE STILL LOOKS SO SERIOUS WHILE SHE PLAYS INNOCENT
GRIT (CLENCHED)

DAMN, I'M AFRAID OF WHAT SHE'LL GROW INTO!
...THIS ALL STARTED BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO CHANGE THE LOCK TO A SIMPLER ONE, DIDN'T IT?
FIRST OF ALL—

I TALKED TO KIMIYOSHI ABOUT IT AND HAD HIM CHANGE IT TO AN EASIER ONE.
THE LOCK WAS TOO STIFF FOR ME.
THAT'S RIGHT SIR.
...YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE LET THE SAIGUDEN BE INVADED!
IF YOU HAD BEEN WILLING TO SPEND THAT MUCH EFFORT AND LEFT THE STURDY LOCK...
AND OF COURSE, SO IS THE HEAD OF THE KIMIYOSHI FAMILY, SINCE HE'S THE ONE WHO CHANGED THE LOCK!
YOU'RE PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HAPPENED
AND THE HEAD OF THE FURUDE FAMILY WILL HAVE TO MAKE RESTITUTION TOO.
—HAD TO MAKE RESTITUTION. THAT'S WHY HE DISAPPEARED.
THE HEAD OF THE KIMIYOSHI FAMILY—

I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS, SIR.
KEIICHI MAEBARA IS THE ONLY ONE LEFT. I ASK THAT THE FURUDES TAKE CARE OF HIM.
IF MY THREAT WORKED, OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE WILL BE VISITING KEIICHI MAEBARA BEFORE LONG.
IT'S THE SAME AS WITH OUR FAMILY. ANYWAY, I'LL BE COUNTING ON YOU.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO UNDERSTAND. YOU JUST KEEP THAT TROUBLED LOOK ON YOUR FACE.

...THEN SHE'S JUST AS GUILTY AS ONI-BABA!!
IF A FURUDE ASSASSIN APPEARS
WHEN THAT HAPPENS, I DON'T CARE HOW YOUNG SHE IS. I'LL SHOW NO MERCY!!
I'LL REALLY HAMMER THE POINT HOME, INTO EACH OF HER SPOTLESS FINGERS!!!

FUU (SIGH)
KASA (CHIRP)
KASA
KASA
KASA
I WONDER HOW KIMIYOSHI-OJIICHAN IS DOING
HE WOULDN'T DIE AFTER JUST ONE NIGHT, RIGHT...?
KIMIYOSHI-OJIICHAN
I REALLY LIKED HIM
KASA
KASA
KASA
ONI-BABA WAS SO STRICT
...AND HE WAS KIND AND SPOILED ME ENOUGH TO MAKE UP FOR IT

KANA
KANA
KANA

...IS THE SOUND OF HINAMIZAWA ...
TO ME, THE CRY OF THE HIGURASHI...
カナカナカナ
A PLACE I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO BE.
ALL IT DOES IS MAKE ME FEEL THAT LONELINESS.

KANA (CRIES?)
KANA
KANA
KANA
KANA
KANA
KANA
ピー (BEEP)
ピー
HELLO, SIR.
I CAME TO ASK FOR SOME SOY SAUCE.
SOY SAUCE?
RIKA-CHAN...? WHAT'S UP?
KANA (CRIES?)
RIKA FURUDE!?

GACHA (OPENING)
IS THAT REALLY WHAT RIKA FURUDE IS HERE FOR?
ALL RIGHT, COME IN.
OH RIGHT, THE BULLE-TIN...
NOTE: WE STILL HAVE LOTS OF HOMEMADE SOY SAUCE. FEEL FREE TO STOP BY THE SONOJAKU!
MAYBE THE SOY SAUCE IS AN EXCUSE...
...AND SHE WANTS TO TALK TO ME IN SECRET...?
GOOD EVENING, SIR.
GACHA (OPENING)

I'VE GOTTEN GOOD AT USING A FUNNEL TO FILL THE SOY SAUCE BOTTLE TOO, SIR.
KYU (SQUEEZE)
キュッ

I'LL FILL IT UP, SO YOU WAIT HERE, OKAY?

ALL RIGHT, COME IN
TA
タ
TA (STEP)
タ

SHE WANTS TO FILL IT HERSELF?
FINE. IT WOULD BE A LITTLE UNSETTLING TO LEAVE RIKA HERE ALL BY HERSELF.

HITA
ひた
HITA (STEP)
ひた
PETA
ぺた
PETA (STEP)
ぺた

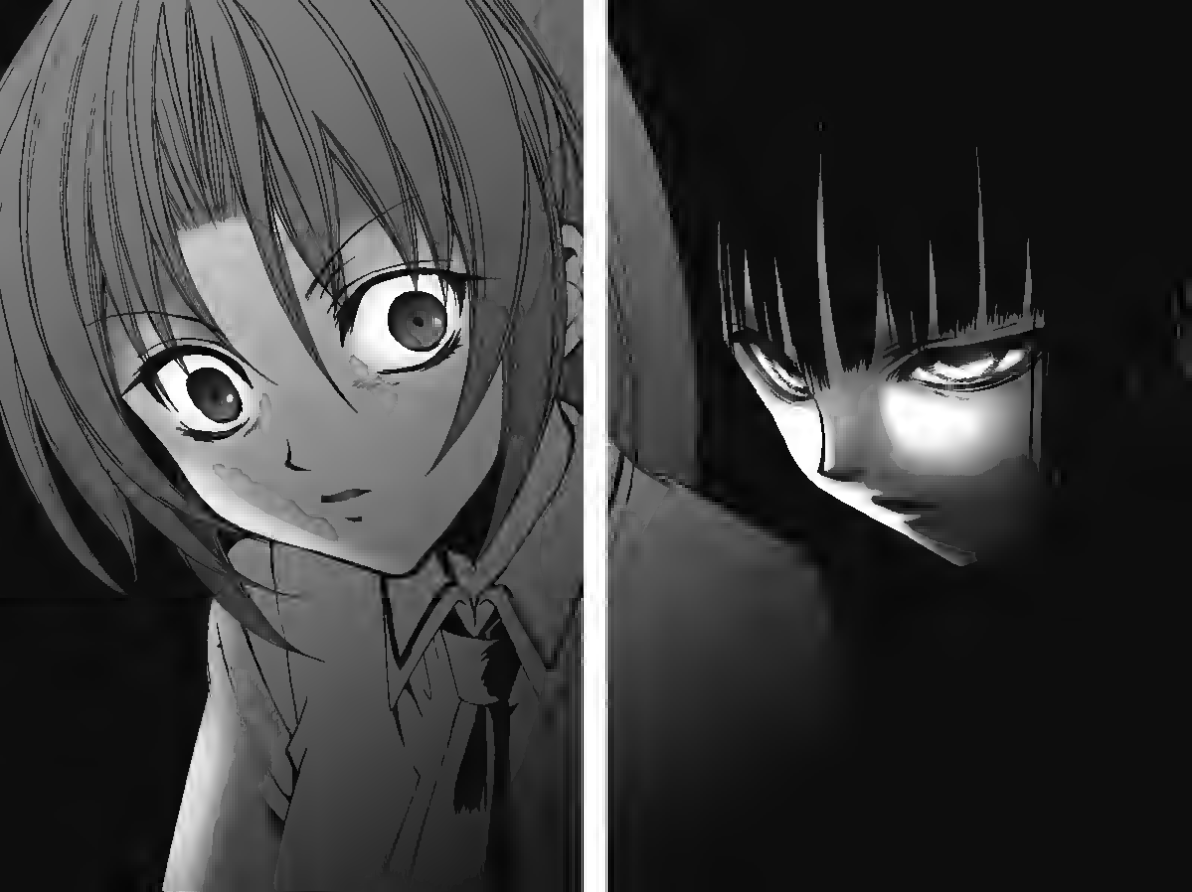
HITA
PETA
OH, I'M SORRY
MEW!
MEW !!

ペた
PETA
STEP2
ペた
PETA
ペた
PETA
COMEBACK
ペた
ペた
ペた
ペた
ペた
ペた
ペた
PETA
ペた
NIHAA
CHEGAR!
にはー
.....

AND WHEN I STOP SUDDENLY, I HEAR ONE EXTRA
OUR FOOTSTEPS ARE ALWAYS TOGETHER
SHE'S HAVING FUN OVER-LAPPING OUR FOOTSTEPS
THIS GIRL...

BUT BECAUSE THEY'RE THIS GIRL'S FOOT-STEPS...
SHE'S STILL THERE WHEN I TURN AROUND

TAKE AS MUCH AS YOU WANT
WE STILL HAVE PLENTY



EH ...?
RIKA ...!?
BUT...
EH...?
WHO !?

NO
GH!?
HNNNNGH!
!?

KH ...!!
NO ...!!

SHE'S NOT RIKA !?

ARGH, DAMMIT!! CALM DOWN!!
COOL YOUR HEAD! COOL YOUR HEAD!!
!?

A SYRINGE !?
KAIRI GASPS?
ｱｯ

GRIP
GRIP
AAAA

ABOUT THE "EYE OPENING ARC" THE BORDERS OF HINAMIZAWA

ORIGINAL STORY, SUPERVISOR: RYUKISHI07

HELLO, THIS IS RYUKISHI07. I THINK I WOULD LIKE TO USE THIS VOLUME'S AFTERWORD TO TALK ABOUT THE MAIN SETTING OF *HIGURASHI WHEN THEY CRY*, HINAMIZAWA.

WHEN TELLING THE EARLY STORIES OF *HIGURASHI*, FOR CONVENIENCE'S SAKE I PORTRAYED HINAMIZAWA AS AN EXCLUSIVE, REMOTE VILLAGE—THE IDEAL SETTING FOR A CLASSIC JAPANESE-STYLE MYSTERY.

WHEN I SAY "EXCLUSIVE, REMOTE VILLAGE," I THINK THAT YOU ALL FEEL AN UNPLEASANT ATMOSPHERE, LIKE IT'S CLOSED OFF FROM THE INSIDE, AND THE PEOPLE ARE VERY UNFRIENDLY TO OUTSIDERS. BUT IF YOU LOOK AT IT THE OTHER WAY AROUND, YOU MIGHT SEE THAT THE NEIGHBORS ARE ALL VERY CLOSE AND HELP EACH OTHER OUT AND THAT IT'S A VERY PLEASANT SOCIETY.

IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT, MAYBE WE'RE ALL EXCLUSIVE AND ISOLATED MOST OF THE TIME. WHEN WE UNDERSTAND SOMETHING, THEN WE CONSTANTLY SHOW OFF OUR COMPREHENSION OF IT. BUT WHEN WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND SOMETHING, WE ACTIVELY REFUSE TO ATTEMPT ANY UNDERSTANDING.

IN THAT CASE, IF WE CHANGE THAT LACK OF UNDERSTANDING INTO UNDERSTANDING, THEN MAYBE WE CAN MOVE FROM CREEPY HINAMIZAWA TO FUN HINAMIZAWA.

FEELING THAT WAY, I MEANT TO WRITE THE STORY TO POINT OUT THAT WHEN WE FEEL LIKE SOMETHING IS EXCLUDING US, MAYBE THAT'S BECAUSE WE'RE ALSO BEING EXCLUSIVE. WHEN IN ROME, DO AS THE ROMANS DO. IF YOU SHOW THAT YOU UNDERSTAND THEIR WAYS AND ARE WILLING TO FOLLOW THEM, THEN THEY MIGHT WELCOME YOU AS A NEW FRIEND. IF YOU CAN SENSE THE BORDER BETWEEN CREEPY HINAMIZAWA AND FUN HINAMIZAWA, THEN, AS THE AUTHOR, NOTHING WOULD MAKE ME HAPPIER.

// MY FAVORITE MALE CHARACTER IS COACH IRIE!!

HIS RUGGEDNESS AND PERSISTENCE DRIVE ME CRAZY!

I WANT HIM TO TAKE ME TO HOKKAIDO WITH HIM!!

MY FAVORITE CHARACTERS TO DRAW ARE RENA AND SATOSHI-KUN

RENA HAS THOSE UNBEATABLE LOOKS, WITH HER SEMILONG HAIR AND SAILOR SUIT!

IT'S FUN TO DRAW HER SPACEY EXPRESSIONS, TOO.

SATOSHI-KUN HAS AN AURA ABOUT HIM, AND THAT MAKES HIM FUN TO DRAW.

HE'S MILD-MANNERED AND PUTS UP WITH A LOT, BUT HE SEEMS LIST-LESS SOME-HOW....

ONCE I START TALK-ING ABOUT THE CHAR-ACTERS, SUDDENLY ALL MY SPACE IS GONE.

WELL THEN, LET'S MEET AGAIN IN THE NEXT VOLUME.

■ HELLO, I AM THE ARTIST, HOUJYOU. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR READING THE "EYE OPENING ARC" VOLUME THREE.

IN THIS VOLUME, I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS SOMETHING I'M OFTEN ASKED ABOUT: MY FAVORITE CHARACTERS. OF COURSE, I'LL START OUT BY SAYING THAT I LOVE ALL THE CHARACTERS.

MY FAVORITE GIRL WOULD HAVE TO BE MION. I WAS REALLY TAKEN IN BY HER ANGEL MORT UNIFORM IN THE "COTTON DRIFTING ARC."

BECAUSE OF THAT, WHENEVER I DRAW ILLUSTRATIONS OF MION, I CAN'T HELP BUT PUT A TIMID EXPRESSION ON HER FACE, AND I ALWAYS THINK, "I CAN'T DO THAT!"

MION IS MION BECAUSE THERE'S THAT SIDE OF HER THAT'S STRONG AT THEIR CLUB ACTIVITIES.

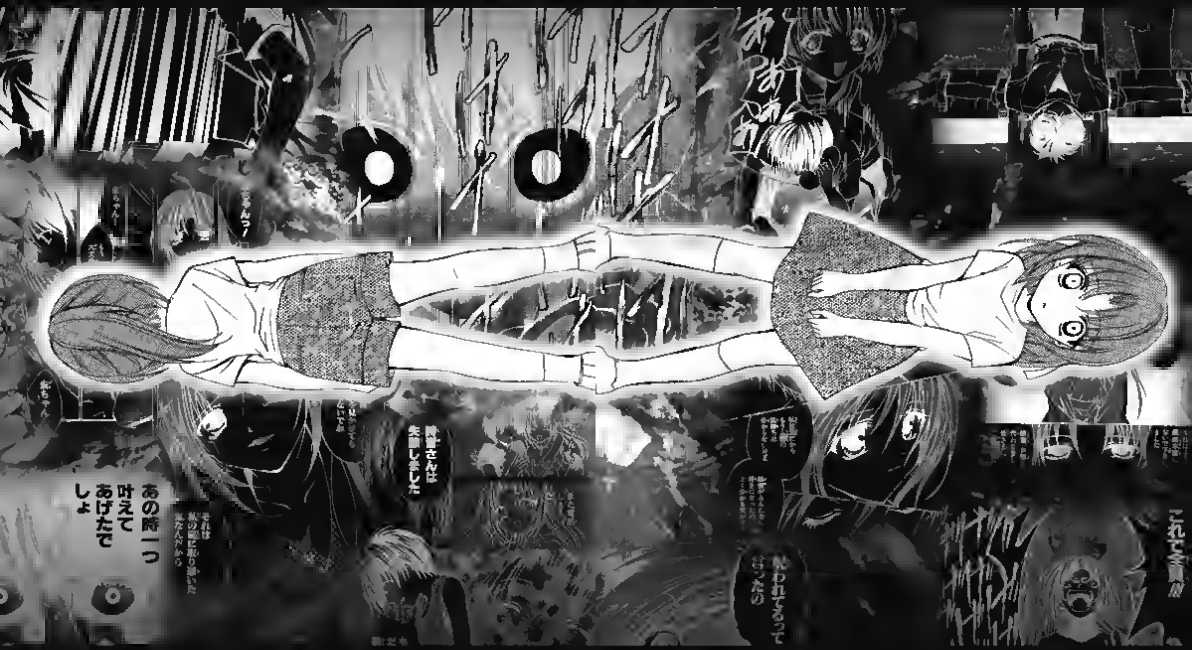
I LOVE THAT BALANCE OF STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS.

BUT WHEN I STARTED DRAWING THE "EYE OPENING ARC," I STARTED TO LOVE SHION JUST AS MUCH!

I LOVE HOW, EVEN THOUGH SHE HAS IT ROUGH, BEING KEPT AT A DISTANCE FROM THE MAIN FAMILY, SHE DOESN'T LET IT BOTHER HER AND KEEPS CHARGING FORWARD.

©GM Kai no Makuhou no Zekuryen

WHERE DID I GO WRONG IN LIFE?



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